

WILHELM MEISTER

BY

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INTRODUCTION

I

GREAT were the hopes that, on opening the Goethe Archives in 1885, a vanished work of Goethe's younger days might be discovered. This was, indeed, none other than the original form of "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship," known to Goethe students as "Wilhelm Meister's Theatrical Mission," the loss of which had long been a continual grief to his readers. The opening sentences of Erich Schmidt's happily rediscovered original "Faust" well express the general disappointment felt on the non-fulfilment of these hopes. Now at last all expectation of ever seeing that original "Meister," of whose earlier existence we had so many evidences, both direct and implied, had to be finally abandoned; and men began to reckon it along with the prose "Tasso," the Reply to Frederick the Great's "Littérature allemande" and other lost works of Goethe's, which no effort has so far been able to bring to light. Yet, alas! there was no manner of doubt as to the immeasurable literary and historical importance of the vanished "Theatrical Mission," and all kinds of hypotheses had been built upon its supposed contents. But at last—

"Though proof of the story was always deferr'd,
This happily now has been furnish'd."

Just as, in another realm, the astronomer has been able by his sagacity to calculate the course of unknown and unseen stars; and, lo! these have at last appeared to his searching eye, even so in the comet-year of 1910 did an unexpected star of the first magnitude arise in the Goethe-skies, a star which, if never seen, was nevertheless not strange, though we had long since renounced all hope of ever beholding it with our natural eyes. Since the discovery, now a quarter of a century ago, of the original "Faust," no find of equal importance to

INTRODUCTION

Goethe lovers has been made. Yea, this newer discovery not only surpasses the former in its bearing upon a single work and the history of its creation, but is even more important in its revelation of Goethe, the poet and man, and of his personal development.

The credit of discovering the original "Meister" is not mine, nor does it belong to any investigator of the Goethe traditions, but rather to one of those dilettantes, in the ancient and truest sense of the word, to whom the guilds of literature have so often been indebted. Indeed, the real discoverer here, as in so many other cases, was a happy chance. Nevertheless, Gustav Billeter,* whose name will henceforth for ever remain linked to the story of Goethe investigation, may justly lay claim to our individual gratitude, in so much that he hastened to meet this chance half way. Billeter is a teacher of ancient languages at the Upper High School at Zürich, where he has known how to instil into his pupils his own enthusiasm for Goethe. Thus it came about that in December, 1909, one of these came to him with a manuscript which had lain many long years in his father's desk, to ask if it were of any importance. Upon the cover Billeter read an inscription: "Manuscript of Goethe's book 'The Sorrows of Young Werther'"; but a brief inspection showed that the work was "Wilhelm

* See his work, "Goethe, Wilhelm Meister's Theatrical Mission. Communications respecting the newly found earliest form of Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship" (Zürich, Rascher & Co., 1910). In this the author, in addition to a brief Introduction, gives a brightly inspired estimate of the work, along with numerous extracts. Compare also my own works on the subject, the major portion of which are incorporated in this Introduction: "Wilhelm Meister and the great Goethe Find at Zürich, an Address delivered at Frankfurt a. M., on April 9th, 1910, by special request of the Freie Deutsche Hochstift" (*Deutsche Rundschau*, May number, 1910); and "Wilhelm Meister's Theatrical Mission. The great Zürich Goethe Find" (*Goethe-Jahrbuch*, 1910, pp. 43 & seq.); also, H. G. Graf, "Goethe on his Poetry," first part, Vol. II., pp. 696 & seq. (Frankfurt a. M., 1902); G. v. Schulthess-Rechberg, "Frau Barbara Schulthess of Schoenenhof, the Friend of Lavater and Goethe" (Zürich, 1903); Eugen Wolff's "Mignon. A Contribution to the History of 'Wilhelm Meister'" (Munich, 1909); Hans Berendt's "Goethe's 'Wilhelm Meister.' A Contribution to the History of its Development" (Dortmund, 1911). At this point, and with reference to the Second Book, Chapter VI., of the "Mission," I should like also to call attention to Goethe's drawing of the judgement scene reproduced in the new Morris Edition of "Young Goethe" (Vol. III., p. 100).

INTRODUCTION

Meister." Imagining that it was merely a copy of the familiar "Apprenticeship," he laid it on one side in order to complete some other work. This being finished, he took up the sheets for more detailed examination on the last day of January, 1910. Here he soon found himself on unknown territory, and before the end of the Third Book stumbled on the title, "Wilhelm Meister's Theatrical Mission." This sent him to the study of the special expert literature on the subject, and ere long he knew what a treasure fortune had brought to his hand. To my delight, it was my own annotated edition of "Wilhelm Meister"* which gave him the desired information, and to this accident I owe the great honour and pleasure of being entrusted with the publication of the precious manuscript, which was handed to me for preparation at the end of June last year. A second reason for honouring me with the task of scientifically utilizing this great find lies in the fact that I occupy the Chair of German Language and Literature in a Swiss university, and, as the work was discovered in Switzerland, it was only right that it should be issued to the world from that country.

II

LET us briefly call to mind what Switzerland meant to Goethe, and see how it came to pass that "Wilhelm Meister's Theatrical Mission" should first be discovered there.

Goethe visited Switzerland on many occasions. In his "Dichtung und Wahrheit" he speaks with especial charm of the first of these Swiss tours, in 1775; but in an independent work, his "Letters from Switzerland," he also records recollections both of this first visit and of his second in 1779. But we possess numerous other reminiscences of Swiss impressions. One of the most beautiful of the songs addressed to Lili was composed on the Lake of Zürich; and his "Song of the Spirits over the Waters" was inspired by the Staubbach in the Lauterbrunn Valley. The scene of one of his operas, "Jery and Baetely" is laid among the mountains of the Canton of

* Goethe's Works. Issued in collaboration with many expert students by Professor Dr. Karl Heinemann, Vols. 10 and 11 (Leipzig and Vienna, Bibliographisches Institut, v. J., 1903-04).

INTRODUCTION

Uri, and we know that for a long time Goethe cherished the idea of a great Tell poem. We seem to trace Swiss influences in certain glorious scenes of "Faust"; and in Mignon's song: "Know'st thou the Land where Citron-Blossom Blows," as well as in the earlier chapters of the "Apprenticeship," the scene appears to be dominated by the Gotthard, with its gloomy chasms and passes, musical with the jingle of mule-trains.

The first of these Swiss tours was undertaken by Goethe in company with the brothers Stolberg, and in the well-known Werther costume. He wished to find out for himself whether he "could do without" Lili, who made him at once so happy and so unhappy. At first everything drew him back—"towards fatherland and love." But a letter to a lady named Karschin reveals what Haller's homeland soon became to his soul. "The entire circulation of my small individuality has gained much from my visit to Switzerland." And a letter of Goethe's to Sophie Laroche remains for ever a title of glory for Helvetia, in which he says: "Right glad am I that I know a land such as Switzerland; let happen to me now what may, I have there a place of refuge." Once more, in 1779, the Goethe of the Weimar "ten years" sought refuge here just at the time when the "Theatrical Mission" was in process of inception—although 1779 is the one year of the long series beginning with 1777 in which no additions to the work are chronicled. This time Goethe wishes not only to lay aside his harness, and seek great impressions for himself, but also to communicate to another all that Switzerland had shown him four years earlier. The intention is that the Duke Carl August, whose education was at that time Goethe's task, voluntarily undertaken and carried out with faithfulness and success, shall be completely withdrawn from the enervating and levelling influences of Court life; the serene majesty of Nature and the character of a great man are to be his purifiers and instructors. The great man is Lavater in Zürich, "the seal and topmost summit of the whole journey." Happy and uplifted, as the phrase runs in "Ilmenau," the pair return home; a monument is planned for the park at Weimar, which may express their sense of gratitude to Switzerland. Goethe's third visit to Switzerland in 1797 did not equal these two in personal importance for himself. His companion on this occasion was the Swiss painter Heinrich

INTRODUCTION

Meyer von Staefa, who for many years also shared the poet's house in Weimar as his faithful and greatly valued friend.

Among the circle of friends in Zürich who clustered around and almost worshipped Lavater, and with whom Goethe became acquainted in 1775, the first place for him was occupied by Frau BARBARA SCHULTHESS, wife of the manufacturer David Schulthess at Schoenenhof. Even in the homeland Goethe had heard from Lavater of this most excellent woman, and had already entered into correspondence with her, an intercourse which lasted for many years, but of which unfortunately only very meagre fragments remain to reveal to us the beautiful relations existing between these two persons. To Frau Baebe a place of honour will ever be accorded among the best and truest female friends of Goethe. She was what Goethe loved to call a "Nature." A woman of warm temperament and of decidedly motherly instincts, such as so admirably adorned Frau Aja; yet at the same time a woman of great independence and resolution, thoroughly sound and capable, and moreover prudent and elegant. Lavater calls her "a manly woman" ("eine Maennin"), and "Ever the same"; while our poet speaks of her as "the Cordial One," and it is certain that her image floated before him when describing the "Fair Good One" in "Meister's Travels." He had already often written to her from Italy, by which time they addressed each other by the familiar "du"; and on his return from Rome he made a considerable détour in order to see her once more. In Constance they passed eight happy days together; but Zürich he avoided on Lavater's account, whom he now regarded with quite other eyes than formerly. Once more he sought her out upon his third tour; but now it is already manifest that he has become another man; the Goethe *after* Italy, who writes against Christianity and takes a Christiane into his house, becomes ever more and more a stranger to the pious and severely moral friend of Lavater. With bitter pain she perceives how their pathways diverge; but it was not she, "ever the same," who broke off their relationship, and she never forgot the poet.*

* Attempts have been made to draw certain conclusions from the fact that Barbara Schulthess is nowhere mentioned in Goethe's writings. On

INTRODUCTION

Like Charlotte von Stein, who was never quite free from traces of jealousy towards her, Barbara Schulthess also belongs to the most intimate of those friends to whom before the Italian journey the poet Goethe delighted to unbosom himself. To her also applies the speech of the Princess in "Tasso": "I rejoice when prudent men speak, that I may understand what they intend." With thankful and intelligent pleasure she received from Goethe not only his printed works, such as "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship" and "Hermann and Dorothea," but also those which were not yet published, viz.: the poem of "Tasso" and "*Wilhelm Meister's Theatrical Mission*." In a letter of 1783 Goethe requested his mother to forward after perusal the manuscript of the Fourth Book of "Wilhelm Meister" to Frau Schulthess; adding that he had caused a special casket to be made for the MSS. of the original "Meister." But not content with literally devouring the manuscript (that it might be speedily returned to Weimar), Frau Baebe and her eldest daughter, of the same name, set to work and made a careful copy of the whole as the successive parts came to hand. In the diary of the younger Baebe for 1783—85 we can trace how the "Meister" consignments arrived from Weimar, the enthusiasm they evoked and how the work of copying progressed. And it is this copy which to-day reveals to us the original "Meister," although the poet's own manuscript was duly destroyed. This is the copy which now, after the lapse of a hundred and twenty-five years, has been found in the house of a descendant of the dear good woman who made it. In like manner we possess the original "Faust" in the careful transcript of a lady friend of Goethe's, Luise von Goeckhausen, the Weimar maid of honour. It is a happy providence that we should thus owe the preservation of two such precious masterpieces by the most "womanly" of poets to the faithful care and fine sensibility of feminine admirers!

the other hand, a recently discovered project for the continuation of "Dichtung und Wahrheit" (*Goethe-Jahrbuch*, Vol. 28, p. 13) proves that the poet intended to immortalise the image of his Swiss friend in a place of the first importance.

INTRODUCTION

III

“WILHELM MEISTER” has been called the most personal of Goethe’s imaginative works. Like “Faust,” it also constitutes one of his great life-works, and, excepting “Faust,” no other occupied so much of his time. More than half a century lies between the earliest inception of the “Theatrical Mission” and the fixing of the last coping-stone upon the “Travels.” Both the young Goethe and the aged Goethe have their share therein. Like “Faust,” it is a work which allows us clearly to trace his various creative periods in its several strata of construction. “Wilhelm Meister” was not one of those works produced at one casting, like “Goetz” or “Werther,” but was compacted together of many elements. Strongly marked differences of tendency, mood and style detract from its harmony as a work of imagination, and render its comprehension more difficult. This Goethe himself very clearly felt, and described the romance as one of his “most incalculable productions,” to which “he himself scarcely possessed the key.” Whoever, then, would understand the work must first of all learn something of the *history of its development*.

The oldest surviving witness to Goethe’s labour on “Wilhelm Meister” occurs in February, 1777, or only three years after the completion of “Werther.” This consists of a brief notice in Goethe’s diary that he had dictated some of it in the garden. May we not regard it as premonitory of the great romance’s budding, that in the “Geschwister,” written in October, 1776, he calls the two lovers Wilhelm and Mariana,* and makes the former a merchant? Yea, it is even probable, as has been shown by Berendt, that its inception goes back to those Frankfurt times (about 1773), mirrored therein with such visible distinctness. Not only does it reproduce the days of boyhood and his delight in the marionette theatre; but in Book 2, Chap. I., the story specially reminds us of Wilhelm’s illness, and of the student Goethe returning sick from Leipzig; while Lili may well have supplied details for the description of

* Most of Werther’s letters are also addressed to a Wilhelm, Lotte had a sister Marianne, and there is a character of the same name in his opera “Lila.”

INTRODUCTION

Mariana. As early as July, 1777, Knebel reports that Goethe had read him "his new production, 'Wilhelm Meister's Theatrical Mission,' which is a very fine work." But not only to his neighbours in Weimar did Goethe communicate his growing work, but also, as we have seen, to distant friends, thus, for instance, to Merck of Darmstadt, whom he informed in 1780 that in this romance he intended to present "theatrical life in its entirety." Five years later the poet announces to Frau von Stein that he has completed the Sixth Book, and therewith the first part of his novel. It is precisely these six Books which we now possess in the Schulthess copy. Six more, then, were to complete the "Theatrical Mission"; but in the seventh Goethe appears to have stuck fast, and the plan for the remainder, which he wrote out in 1785, has not been preserved. The work came to a standstill. Goethe crossed his water-shed, Italy, and became another poet, who in a second great stage of productivity slowly brought a vastly altered scheme to completion. In 1787 he wrote from Rome to the Duke Carl August that he might perhaps finish the novel by the time he entered upon his fortieth year; but in this same year his "Italian Journey" clearly revealed that under those skies no such continuation was possible. The work had become strange to its author, and he gave the preference to others. Not until 1791 did he bethink him again of that outline for Books 7 to 12, and two years later we hear him speak of his "old novel," which he intends "by hook or by crook" to finish next year. But to effect this some external pressure was needful, and this he procured by selling the novel in 1794 to the Berlin publisher Unger.

And now at last, with Schiller's earnest co-operation, the task of recasting, or rather recreating, the entire work from the Third Book onwards was commenced, in order to prepare it for the press. The six original Books of the "Theatrical Mission" were more or less bodily cast into the melting-pot, freshly run together and re-written. In the printed edition they correspond to the first four Books and a few chapters of the Fifth. To Goethe himself they represent, as he once observed to Herder, nothing more than a "pseudo confession," which he felt impelled to shake "from heart and neck"; and only now that we have the "Theatrical Mission" in our hands, can we

INTRODUCTION

see how truly the poet spoke when he assured Schiller that he was really nothing more than the editor of what had been written long years before. Even the old name of the novel must go, and a new one, "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship," meets us for the first time in 1793 in a copyist's receipt for wages. Early in 1795 the first volume appeared in Berlin, and in the following year the work was completed in four volumes of two Books each.

IV

EVEN this brief outline of the development of the novel reveals how complete was the breach in its building and articulation, a fact to which Goethe himself repeatedly called attention. We do not possess two complete conceptions of one complete work, which can be conveniently compared, but—just as is the case with the "Travels"—on one hand the original form only of the first half, and on the other the finally executed design, into the earlier half of which that original portion had been incorporated, but with manifold variations. In referring, therefore, to the completed "Apprenticeship" we can only speak of the incomplete "Theatrical Mission" so far as we do not consider it merely as a fragment.

This is not the only case in which an artist, dealing with a great work which has occupied him for a long time, has shifted his original standpoint, and in which something quite different from his first plan has at last been evolved. A work of art grows with its creator; the artist grows with his creation. In such cases it is not surprising that the reader, who can only view the completed work as a whole, should stumble upon détours, blanks and contradictions, or should here and there miss mortices and connecting joints. A novel which was thus changed in its entire scheme and tendency during growth, and therefore in its artistic unity, was Immermann's "Münchhausen." The author himself compares this work to "a boy who suddenly takes his fling in his fifteenth year." His first intention was merely to write a satirical novel of the day, which should reveal exterior life as in a concave mirror, in order later, out of innermost experience, to set purest poetry over against satire, to place the positive alongside the negative, and the optimistic element beside the pessimistic.

INTRODUCTION

Precisely so was it also with "Wilhelm Meister," the greatest of all German romances. This is not the place to attempt anything approaching an exhaustive analysis of this truly inexhaustible work, or even to discuss in outline the full significance of this newly-discovered version. We must content ourselves with merely indicating a few of its more salient points of view.

Schiller, who followed the final editing of the "Apprenticeship" with the sagacious and helpful watchfulness of a truly productive criticism, confessed to his friend in 1796 that he had so far been able to recognise the continuity of the romance, but not its unity. To this Goethe replied that no other unity would be found in the book than that of a steadily advancing continuity. Schiller several times further remarked that, in his opinion, the *main idea* had not been sufficiently worked out; and it is very characteristic that so clear-sighted and soundly critical a reader as Goethe's mother could not perceive the end of the "Apprenticeship" at the close of the Eighth Book, but reckoned with certainty upon a fifth volume to follow.

Goethe was conscious from the very outset that his original plan, so far as he ever clearly conceived one, had changed yet more and more as the work progressed. He loved his offspring, "not as it was, but for what it might become." These words he wrote to Frau von Stein in 1785—that is to say, while still working at the "Theatrical Mission"—and during the period of its great transformation never felt quite easy in his mind concerning the process. "After the singular fate which has befallen this production, both from within and without, it would indeed be no wonder that I should grow confused about it. I have in the end simply held fast to my original idea, and shall rejoice if it lead me safely out of the labyrinth." But that he had not remained true to this "idea" he also confessed to Schiller. He seemed to himself, said he, "like one who, having set down a series of great and little numbers one above the other, then wilfully makes mistakes in the addition, in order, from God knows what strange whim, to diminish the sum total." In his "Annals" Goethe endeavours to explain the idea which had guided him. "The beginnings of 'Wilhelm Meister,'" he there unfolds, "sprang from a dim presentiment of the great truth, that a man may often attempt to do some-

INTRODUCTION

thing for which Nature has denied him the necessary qualifications ; would undertake and practise things in which he can never become adept. An inward sentiment warns him to desist, but being unable to come to a clear understanding with himself, he is driven along false pathways to false purposes, without rightly knowing how it has been done. Among these may be reckoned everything that we speak of as false tendency, dilettantism, etc. If now and then a glimmering of the truth creep into his soul, there arises a feeling which borders on despair, and yet, only half resisting, he lets himself be borne along upon the wave. Not a few waste the fairest part of their lives in this way, and sink at last into prodigious dejection. And yet it is possible for all these false steps to lead on to some priceless good : a presentiment ever more and more unfolded, revealed and confirmed in ' Wilhelm Meister ' ; yea, which is at last emphatically declared in the words : ' Thou seemest to me like Saul the son of Kish, who, setting forth to seek his father's asses, found a kingdom.' "

This certainly was a well-developed idea, and corresponds on the whole with the story of the novel. But it was not until many years later—in 1819—that Goethe wrote these words, and it is at least doubtful whether he did not afterwards deduce this idea from the novel itself, as it lay complete before him, although he said it had guided him all through from the beginning. Similar deductions on his part have not seldom been noted.

In less general terms, but with more precision, Schiller has formulated the leading idea of the " Apprenticeship," as it appeared to him. The goal which Wilhelm, after a long series of errors, finally attained was that he passed from an empty and uncertain ideal—that of the actor—to a definite and active life, yet without thereby sacrificing his power of idealisation ; the theatre was to him the bridge from the world of actuality to that of the ideal.

" Wilhelm Meister " is a *romance of the theatre*. " The play lasted very long " are the first words of the " Apprenticeship." Our first glimpse of the hero is as the lover of an actress, a fiery enthusiast for the stage, who, since the days of earliest childhood and of a well-remembered marionette performance, has

INTRODUCTION

known nothing higher than the theatre, and has even made several attempts as a dramatic author. He can find no satisfaction in the career of a merchant, to which, like both father and friend, he is to devote himself. "He fancied himself conscious of a distinct summons of Fate, who, through Mariana, reached out her hand to drag him from that stagnating and dreary burgher life, which he had so long desired to escape . . . and with self-complaisant modesty saw in himself the eminent actor, the creator of that future national theatre, after which he had heard so many sigh." But the fancied faithlessness of his beloved extinguishes this plan; he seeks, and appears to find, forgetfulness in diligent office-work, declares that it was all a mistake, and devotes his dramatic masterpieces to the flames. By an external accident, after the lapse of years, he becomes associated with a troupe of actors, and once more flatters himself that he may finally succeed "in drawing a few cupfuls from the great ocean of true Nature, to be dispensed from the stage to the thirsty public of his fatherland." Shakespeare is the shining star which now guides him; the great Briton whose name he also bears, and who had been for Goethe himself the key wherewith to unlock the world of life. From the wandering troupe he passes to the more reputable permanent stage of his friend Serlo.* But now once more his friend and brother-in-law, the energetic business man Werner, seeks to convince him of the happiness of burgher life and of practical toil. "What good will it do me to forge good iron, when my own inner-self is full of dross? or to reduce an estate to order, when I am not at one with myself?" His sole and highest purpose is now to strive after true culture, the development of his inner manhood, a purpose, he believes, only to be attained in the theatre. In Germany a certain degree of personal cultivation was only possible for the nobleman, and the burgher forfeited his individuality. Upon the boards alone could a "man of culture appear in his full lustre, as good personally as in the upper classes." Genuine German life was just then in a condition of stagnation, and it was precisely in the scenic world of brilliant

* In Serlo we have to think of F. L. Schroeder, of Hamburg, who first produced "Hamlet" there. In the original "Meister" the town is indicated as "H—," and as a "brisk, industrial town" (Book 6, Chapter VIII.).

INTRODUCTION

make-believe that many of its most gifted and ardent youth found refuge, consolation and compensation. Wilhelm signs Serlo's contract. As Hamlet, whose rôle well suited his disposition, he meets with merited success, and thus begins to dream once more of "a new epoch for the German theatre." But, alas! this ideal vanishes only too quickly; serious tragedy has to make way for light opera, the darling child of a spectacle-loving public; the troupe declines from the success attained and is disbanded, while Wilhelm sees himself thrust aside as superfluous. A mission entrusted to him by the dying actress Aurelia leads him to the castle of her former faithless lover Lothario, and into the circle of those wise and capable men who are destined to complete his education. Here he beholds them engaged in consistent and earnest action for the general weal, and the image of the theatrical world fades completely. The stages of his previous life now seem but as so many wanderings from the true path. Jarno ungently shakes him from his darling dream of becoming an accomplished actor, and once more he writes to Werner: "I am leaving the theatre and attaching myself to men whose intercourse must in every sense conduct me to downright and certain activity." He discovers that he has sought for culture where none was to be found. He has learned wisdom from his own errors, his apprenticeship is ended: "A new-born day invites to newer shores." "Here, or nowhere, is America!" Jarno teaches him: "It is well for a man on first entering the world to think highly of his own person, to aim at gaining many advantages for himself, that he may seek to do everything possible. But when development has once attained a certain degree, it is of advantage that he learn to lose himself in a larger society, that he learn to live for others and to forget self in serviceable action. Then first will he learn to know himself; for intercourse really brings us into comparison with others." And the same Jarno explains to him later that a man cannot become happy until his own free and unfettered endeavours have themselves fixed his limitations. Wilhelm is no true actor, but merely a dilettante, a born dilettante; his "mission" was only a pretence, a self-deception; the stage but a transitory interlude, a step upon the path of culture in its highest sense. The enthusiastic dilettante is now trained to real work; he

INTRODUCTION

who imagined himself a "master" recognises that he is a pupil. As H. Hettner finely expresses it, he had sought the actor's art, and found the art of living. This highest form of culture, this maturing of a true and full manhood, becomes now Wilhelm's ideal, as it was the ideal of the whole humanitarian age, with its joy in education, and of Goethe the classicist. The young Goethe of the "Sturm und Drang" had discovered in Shakespeare and his tragedies an utmost highest, in which he found a "mission" to become himself a German Shakespeare. But to the Goethe of the Weimar ten years there appeared another mission: for long years he abandoned poetry in order to create for the general weal, for the great whole, finding sufficient task in each day's advancement. And it is in the person of young Wilhelm that he reveals to us his own development.

This idea of culture in the sense of an ideal humanity is the idea of "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship," which we have here developed apart from that circle of symbolic female forms, among whom Wilhelm's devious pathway reaches step by step to its perfection; apart also from the secret and mysterious guidance proceeding from the potentates of the tower; apart, too, from the romantic and poetic figures of the book, Mignon and the old harper; and apart, finally, from all which his long unstilled, but eventually satisfied, longing for Italy meant to his imagination.

Was this idea from the very outset the underlying and leading thought of the romance, or was its aim originally another and a nearer? In other words: Is the title, the "Theatrical Mission," to be understood verbally and definitely, or not? Is it a question here, as in Goethe's contemporary poem of "Hans Sachs' Poetic Mission," of an actually executed real mission, carried through to a successful issue; or is the title to be taken as ironically intended, just as the name "Meister" may not without irony be employed in both senses for the eternal *scholar* Wilhelm? Was this mission from the very beginning only a pretended, an erroneous one? Minor declared himself of this opinion years ago. But in this he is wrong; for although the original "Meister" does not remain uniform, but rather betrays manifest divergencies from its

INTRODUCTION

original plan, and breaks off half-way ; although it shows Wilhelm as occasionally expressing strong aversion to the stage's " will o' the wisp ; " and though the poet frequently treats his hero's opinions ironically as one who seldom lacks the " curtain of self-deception " (See Book III., Chap. XII., and Book V., Chap. II.) ; yet it is at least possible that in the old plan of the novel Wilhelm, the successful theatrical poet and actor whom we learn to know, might eventually rise to be a great *régisseur* and theatrical manager, and on this wise fulfil a mission, such as may well have enticed the youthful Goethe of that day. Let us remember Lessing and the Hamburg enterprise, and recognise that attempts to create a German National Theatre were then the order of the day, and were very much over-estimated in regard to their influence upon general German culture. Why then did the novel change its tendency ? Because the young Wilhelm no longer corresponded to Goethe. In a letter to Charlotte von Stein in 1782, he calls it, exaggerating here already ; his " own beloved dramatic likeness ; " while twelve years later, as mentioned above, he describes the romance, as merely a " pseudo confession."

But in any case the original " Meister " fragment is through and through a theatre romance, an impress of Goethe's maturing theatrical experiences and perceptions. Outwardly the poet confines himself much more than in the " Apprenticeship " to the sphere of the wandering troupe's Scarron-like " Roman Comique ; " though I do not believe in the direct influence of the same, as recently again maintained by Eugen Wolff. The brilliantly written Third and Fourth Books, which to us are mainly new territory, must have especial interest as a pregnant piece of the theatrical and intellectual history of the eighteenth century. The manageress de Retti, with her brilliant dramatic gifts, who with her company produces Wilhelm's " Belshazzar," is a truly striking character. Her manly energy and haughty lust of power, her serious views of art, the agitated variety of her life and loves, her alternating relations to the " purists " of German literature, and her declaration : " I banished the buffoon," make her almost an embodiment of the famous actress Neuber.

INTRODUCTION

V

As may be gathered from our outline of the genesis of "Wilhelm Meister," we had long been variously informed as to the character and contents of the "Theatrical Mission," and it is now exceedingly instructive to establish to what extent such information is confirmed, and how far the *hypotheses* based thereupon still hold good. By way of preface let me say that, on the whole, the differences between the two versions are not so great as we were beforehand disposed to assume, and many a bold conjecture is now as completely contradicted as was the case with many "Faust" hypotheses when the original of that work came to light. Above all is this the fate of Wolff's suggestion that the union of Wilhelm and Mignon in the bonds of love and their united flight to the lauded land of Italy were the final dénouement of the "Theatrical Mission."

Of the last-named work we knew not only the title, and a solitary quotation from the Fourth Book, which had come down to us by accident, but also the date of its creation and the approximate size of certain Books. This last item we knew from the still extant receipts of Goethe's secretary Vogel, who noted upon each, Book by Book, the exact number of pages copied. But, more than this, we possess records from several persons to whom Goethe communicated the manuscript of his growing work.

When, in 1806, during a stay in Frankfurt, Ludwig Tieck visited Goethe's mother, she told him—so his biographer Koepke relates—that she long kept "the old Wilhelm Meister" upon her book-shelves in six manuscript volumes: and that in this older version "the marriage of Wilhelm and Mariana was to form the conclusion." This statement fails entirely to be confirmed, and we can only conclude, presuming that the Tieck-Koepke story is correct, that the good lady's very lively fancy had for once played her false.

But it is otherwise with another report concerning "the old Wilhelm Meister," traceable to Herder. In 1795 the latter, writing to Countess Baudissin, says: "One learned to know the young man *from childhood*, became gradually interested in him, even when he falls into error. The poet has now given him another form; we see him at once where we would rather not

INTRODUCTION

see him, and can only understand his aberrations by imagining their cause; but he has not yet so far interested us as to enlist sympathy. I made representations to the poet on this point, but he held to his opinion." That the original "Meister" exhibits this difference, and that we learn to know Wilhelm from childhood, these are now confirmed, and in this respect we endorse Herder's otherwise often unjust comments on the "Apprenticeship." If for a moment we consider one of the most important novels of the nineteenth century, another great romance of culture like "Wilhelm Meister," we shall in many ways find in it the prototype of the latter. Of Gottfried Keller's "Gruener Heinrich" we also possess, as is well known, two versions. In the former the poet introduces his hero as a youth on the point of leaving his native town to perfect himself as a painter in Munich. There he once more reads an old manuscript in which, while still at home, he had noted down the impressions of his childhood. This youthful history of the hero—in the ego style—which fills nearly a thousand pages of print, and sorely interrupts the flow of the narrative, is intended to supply what we should like to have known from its commencement. We therefore entirely concur with Keller's decision, in recasting his work, to show us Henry Lee from childhood. But Goethe does the exact contrary. In the second form of "Wilhelm Meister" the hero steps before us as a grown young man, who now and then relates sundry episodes of his youth; whereas the first version, on the contrary, gave a straightforward, continuous and chronologically natural story of a developing personage. Here, in the "Theatrical Mission," we make acquaintance with Wilhelm from infancy, and in this manner his "Theatrical Mission" is made more clearly comprehensible. In the easy tone of a narrator Goethe takes us to his hero's boyhood, and with all the charm of intimate familiarity paints us the epoch-making Christmas festival. We seem to be one of the party as Wilhelm's splendid old grandmother, whom we at once clasp to our hearts, patches the marionettes together for the children neglected by their own parents. We watch the growing excitement and rapture of the first performance, noting especially how Wilhelm's very soul is stirred, and are at once far more deeply interested in the silent, dreamy and singular boy, who

INTRODUCTION

in his vivid fancy lives a separate inner life, not understood by the others. With that deep insight into the soul of childhood and youth peculiar to the young Goethe we gaze into this unfolding mind. Does not Goethe himself in his own early youth, whose symbolical image the romance sets before us, seem much nearer than in the picture presented in the "Apprenticeship" ? For the same reason the boy Wilhelm of the "Theatrical Mission" appears far truer and more natural than the boy Felix of the "Apprenticeship," or even of the "Travels," in which there is much about him precociously unchildlike.

Whereas in the unbroken sequence of the original version we behold with our own eyes how Wilhelm's passion for the theatre grows and expands, we must in the later form content ourselves with very abbreviated retrospective reports. Instead of the direct record of a simple objective narration, we have Wilhelm speaking of these things casually as a grown man, and not without a certain deprecatory irony, as outgrown stages in his development. And to whom does he tell the story in the "Apprenticeship" ? First to his own mother, who had herself given him the dolls' theatre, and who knows all about it far better than he ; then further to his lover, who finds no pleasure in the narrative, extending, as it does, through six whole chapters, and whom the poet, with very characteristic self-irony, permits to fall asleep several times during the narration. We therefore entirely agree with Wieland (whose "Agathon" certainly furnished the example for this reconstruction), who, after reading the "Apprenticeship" in 1795, declared that the first form, as written ten years earlier, was far more vivacious than the later work. Indeed, Goethe himself, in that same year 1795, confessed in conversation that he could no longer recall his youthful impressions with the vividness of his earlier "Wilhelm:" for the distinctness of recollection with which he had penned his "Meister" fifteen years before had now, when he came to retouch it, been dulled.

Moreover, in the original "Meister" Wilhelm's father comes bodily before us in the very first chapter, whereas in the "Apprenticeship" we hear him first spoken of in the eleventh. Mariana, too, is not introduced until the fourteenth chapter of Book I., so that we can see the hero's love visibly growing

INTRODUCTION

before our eyes, while the opening paragraphs of the "Apprenticeship" already reveal their passion as at its high-water mark.

VI

MINOR has judiciously pointed out how "Wilhelm Meister" arose out of "recapitulations" on the part of Goethe, and thereby indicated the biographical character of the romance. And how great are its *autobiographical contents*, especially in the earlier Books, even in the second version, we learn, among others, from the splendid letter of Frau Aja in which she says, in acknowledging the receipt of the first volume, "My dear Son, best and heartiest thanks for thy 'Wilhelm!' That was indeed a treat for me! I felt thirty years younger—I saw thee and the other lads busy on the third floor with your preparations for the puppet-play—saw Elise Bethmann being thrashed by the eldest Moor, with much besides." But in the original "Meister" this element of self-biography is far stronger and more tangible; here Goethe tells the story of the dolls' theatre, and other youthful reminiscences, with immensely more freshness and life than in "Dichtung und Wahrheit," written a whole generation later. In the "Apprenticeship" much of this is entirely wiped out or thrust aside. Thus in the latter Wilhelm's sisters are only lightly mentioned, one of them becoming later Werner's wife, but without their entering otherwise into the action of the story at all. On the other hand the original "Meister" introduces a sister of Wilhelm as an actively co-operating person. Her name of Amelia—in the "Apprenticeship" she has no name at all—is an evident alias for Goethe's own beloved sister Cornelia. Here the poet erects for the truest, yea, in some senses the only, partner of his first human and poetical development, a monument such as we have hitherto vainly sought in all his other works. Amelia grows up alongside Wilhelm, and in the second Book gives her hand to Werner (in connection with whom we think of Cornelia's husband Schlosser). She comes before us, especially in the great fourth chapter of Book II. of the "Theatrical Mission," precisely in the character of Cornelia. The young married couple and Wilhelm set out for a walk together. The talk falls

INTRODUCTION

upon Wilhelm's earlier poetic attempts. Their author treats them very patronisingly as things which he has outgrown, and scoffs at them as puerile exercises; while his loving sister earnestly takes up their defence. She tells with what pleasure she had written these pieces down for him—exactly as Cornelia did those of her brother. Like her also, she had shared all her brother's poetical projects, fallen in love with his plays and heroes, and learned the "finest passages" by heart, some of which she proceeds at once to recite.

But it would be a mistake to suppose that, like Wilhelm's sisters, so also his parents approach more nearly in the older version to Goethe's own family. Quite the contrary. It is only in the reconstructed work that the father is presented as an amateur and collector, as indeed Councillor Goethe was. In the original "Meister" he is an ungenial man, living an unhappy married life, and with but little thought for his children. And Wilhelm's mother is at first a "monstrosity." Although the mother of five children, she gives way to a passion for an insipid man, and thereby brings strife and discord into the home. Dissatisfied and wayward, she cannot be anything to her children, and especially estranges Wilhelm, the eldest. Here, therefore, there is nothing in the two parents to remind one of those in the Grosser Hirschgraben at Frankfurt. In the "Theatrical Mission" it is the grandmother on the father's side who provides the sole refuge and consolation of the children, and more particularly of Wilhelm. Here, also it is she who, like Goethe's own grandmother, Frau Goethe, procures the dolls' theatre for the youngsters on Christmas Eve; and though more vividly depicted here than later in "Dichtung und Wahrheit," yet in the "Apprenticeship" she is entirely omitted. Other theatrical impressions of the Frankfurt days are also more clearly reproduced in the first version than in the second. According to this new manuscript, Goethe had really as a boy seen "Faust" upon his puppet-theatre, a fact which we have hitherto only been able to assume.

Among other differences I mention first of all that the secret league which Wilhelm conducts (in what often strikes us as a strange and peculiar manner) is a later addition. Consequently the unknown person who appears at the end of the First Book of the "Apprenticeship" is absent from the

INTRODUCTION

“Mission.” In a word, there is no Abbé to correct in premonitory tones the hero's views of “Fate.” The finely-executed figure of Mariana's match-making servant Barbara was also developed later out of a nameless theatrical seamstress. It is only in the “Apprenticeship” that Laertes grows into a figure of full substance; his rôle falling in the original form partly to Wilhelm. The fair-haired wig-maker's apprentice, who in the “Mission” does not yet bear the name of Frederick, appears here as a young nobleman, and a member of that brilliant circle of which the “Amazon” is the focus; while it is not until the “Apprenticeship” that we hear anything of the Countess's fancy for Wilhelm. The pathological and hysterical symptoms in Mignon are also present in the earlier version—contrary to Eugen Wolff's conjecture. On the other hand, her subsequent history, which makes the old harper her father, is certainly a later invention of the poet's, who as the work progressed changed so many other motives, and thus destroyed the unity of the romance. There is only one more detail which I should like to point out. Mignon's song: “Know'st thou the land where citron-blossom blows?” ends its first strophe with the line:

“'Tis there, 'tis there,
O my beloved, I with thee would fare!”

This expression “beloved,” has always struck us as peculiar, for not only does it lack accord with the exclamations of the other two verses: “O my protector” and “O father,” but, above all, does not agree with Mignon's reserved character, which painfully seeks to hide every sign of her affection for Wilhelm. Now, however, in the “Theatrical Mission” this word becomes *Commander*, which corresponds with a version found among Herder's papers, and has obviously been altered into “beloved” by an error in writing or printing. But other variations of the same song lead us to prefer the later to the earlier version. Thus, golden oranges glow more brightly amid “gloomy” than among “verdant leafage;” and it is an improvement consequent upon actual observation in Italy, when Goethe changes the original, “*bright* stands the laurel” to “*high* stands the laurel.”

What appear to him as new additions in the “Apprenticeship” are indicated by Schiller's friend Koerner in a letter,

INTRODUCTION

which admirably analyses the novel. Here he observes also that, although much is said of the hero's poetical effusions, no specimen is adduced. In the original "Meister" this was otherwise. Chapters III. to V. of the Second Book afford us a deep insight into Wilhelm's poetic beginnings—and, we may here affirm with peculiar confidence, also into Goethe's. The hero's dramatic efforts are discussed in chronological sequence, and although this part of the narrative perhaps makes some rather broad assumptions, yet these are not simply extracts or padding, mere specimens of various dramas which Goethe has dragged in, so to speak, by the hair, but these comments and examples belong rather to the action of the romance, and are intimately connected therewith. Moreover, from the technical standpoint, these are not dry and lifeless discourses, but are translated in these chapters into lively and dramatic dialogue. We hear first of all of boyish, immature imitations of Plautus, then of pastoral, and finally of biblical dramas. Here, too, our extremely scanty knowledge of those first dramatic attempts, which Goethe afterwards burned, is very considerably enlarged; for no doubt they are his own works which are here quoted and analysed. Yea, it is certain that in Wilhelm we recognise Goethe's "beloved dramatic prototype," to whom, moreover, he once gives the epithet of "the old hopeful" (Book III., Chap. X.), a name which he applied to himself in a letter to Knebel of August 13th, 1780. Thus in particular we make much closer acquaintance with Goethe's youthful biblical drama of "Belshazzar," of which so far we only possessed twenty couplets, and hear moreover of two completed and a whole troop of unfinished pastoral pieces, whereas hitherto we only knew of his "Laune des Verliebten." Although the elegant verses in the fourth chapter of Book II., and Mignon's song "Bid me not speak, be nothing spoken," are indicated as excerpts from a youthful drama, "The Queenly Anchorite," yet this is certainly a poetic fiction. These verses are undoubtedly fruits of the Weimar days, indeed of the eighties, and we are hereby warned not to set too high a value on the autobiographical contents of the "Theatrical Mission." In the same way one must be careful not to accept the narrative of the earlier Books of "Dichtung und Wahrheit" as authoritative evidence of the authenticity of the childish reminiscences

INTRODUCTION

contained in this original "Meister." It is probable that here, as in so many other cases (I would indicate only the Frankfurt Gretchen and the one presented in "Faust"), we have a reaction of later poetry upon the record of early experiences.

VII

BUT the original "Meister" is especially important in so far as it permits us to survey much more accurately than heretofore the development of Goethe's *prose style*. Between his "Werther" and the "Apprenticeship," the completion of which is separated by fully twenty years, there now comes, as marking a most momentous stage, the "Theatrical Mission." It indicates far more distinctly than "Egmont," nay, more clearly than any of all Goethe's works, his transition from the Sturm und Drang period to classicism. As regards style this imaginative work bears a Janus head, looking both backward and forward, and signalises an epoch in Goethe's creative career, like that of "Don Carlos" with Schiller. Herman Grimm has already pointed out that the "Apprenticeship" best reveals the peculiarities of Goethe's style; that just as a mountain range may harbour the flora of many latitudes upon its various altitudes, so do we find here specimens of style from all Goethe's epochs. Both Schiller and Koerner have with fine perception already compared the style of the "Apprenticeship" and of "Werther." The relation of the "Apprenticeship" to the original "Meister" is mainly the same as that of the two versions of "Egmont." Here, too, the poet has in the final version deleted what he calls "the too unbraced (literally 'unbuttoned') and student-like" features of his Sturm und Drang style (to Frau von Stein, March 20th, 1782).

With the appearance of the "Theatrical Mission" we are favoured not only with the most comprehensive, but also with the most copious imaginative production of those Weimar ten years which have so long been erroneously regarded as a time of poetic fallowness. It is true that Goethe then practised literary self-denial, and devoted himself voluntarily and mainly to his worldly calling. It was precisely during the eighties that he was President of the Chamber and overwhelmed with busi-

INTRODUCTION

ness of State as at no other time. He often longed despairingly after artistic creation. "O thou sweet poetry! I sometimes exclaim . . . as much as possible I withdraw the water from these fountains and cascades and divert it to mills and water-courses; yet before I am aware, an evil genius turns the tap, and lo! everything springs and sparkles. And when I fancy myself sitting my nag and riding my stage of duty, suddenly the jade beneath me changes to some noble form of invincible wings and spirit, and runs away with me." This, then, is how the "Theatrical Mission" was written, and we can clearly trace its piecemeal growth during such casual hours of poetic activity through all those Weimar years. Though Goethe allowed so many incipient poetical works lie idle, yet his novel never left him. It lies right in the middle of his Weimar productivity. We find dozens of notices in his diaries and letters during the pre-Italian period, such as: "Dictated Meister," or "Meister advances;" and these especially in letters to the beloved woman for whom the romance was first of all written. "Meister" was, in fact, Goethe's chief business just then, as in later years he laconically speaks of work on "Faust" as his "chief business." Yea, it was during and in his toil at the "Theatrical Mission" that Goethe became fully convinced of his own poetic mission. Though apparently almost absorbed in his worldly mission, or devoting his most earnest efforts to natural sciences and the plastic arts, yet in "Meister" he recognised his true vocation. I will quote a passage from a letter to Charlotte von Stein of August 10th, 1782:—"Early this morning I finished the chapter in 'Wilhelm' of which I dictated the commencement to thee. The work procured me a pleasant hour. I was really born to be an author. It gives me purer delight than ever to feel that I have written something which I can consider good." And with such fire and inward sympathy did he work at the "Theatrical Mission" that, as we know, he once broke into tears when, during a ride on horseback, he in fancy reviewed his "favourite situation." This could not have happened to the older author of the "Apprenticeship" or, especially, of the "Travels." Indeed the latter carefully avoided all such extravagances. The first chapter of the "Apprenticeship" ends with Wilhelm's eagerly awaited entrance into Mariana's room. For the first time we

INTRODUCTION

see the lovers together; but instead of picturing their bliss with poetic fire the poet meekly retires. "Who would here venture to describe; whom would it become to express the blessedness of two lovers?" But the author of the "Theatrical Mission" did not shrink from so venturing. Similar proofs that Goethe's style was ageing are plentifully furnished by the "Apprenticeship." I would merely cite the severe propriety of language used here even by uneducated people, and which in old Barbara's narrative of Mariana's misfortunes strikes one as most unreal and improbable. In comparing the two versions we can note how, step by step, Goethe's style changes from the individual to the typical, which then in the "Travels" receives its final impress, often becoming stiff and indeed at times involuntarily comical in its effect. In the second chapter of the original version we are told how the High Priest Samuel and the lovely Jonathan "enthralled" their little hearers in the puppet-play. We see the children gazing motionless with bated breath and half-open mouths into an unimagined world of wonders. But how dull and insipid the narrative when, in the "Apprenticeship," Wilhelm simply remarks that "Samuel and Jonathan appeared to me most venerable!" Taken altogether, we especially regret the dissolution of the First Book of the "Theatrical Mission."

Although the thoroughly epic style of the original "Meister," with its long-drawn periods, is sensibly different from the lyrico-dramatic brevity of "Werther," yet in many places, particularly in the First Books, it reveals much of the luxuriant strength and full-blooded freshness of the Sturm und Drang poet, much of *young* Goethe's naïve directness. Here there is nothing of the artistic and often artificial objectivity, the argumentativeness and general didactics of the "Apprenticeship," of its laboured style and far-fetched symbolism, of its often prolix and disjointed diction, which wastes itself in excessive dialogue; but on the contrary the narrative flows smoothly and rapidly along in unity of form and uninterrupted development. Its style is one of easy confidential speech, of great objectivity, vivacity and warmth of sentiment, and is in a much greater degree coloured and enriched by dialectical elements than is the case later. The realism and humour of the youthful Goethe are here much more richly unfolded. Yet

INTRODUCTION

even in the original "Meister" the external world is not brought before our eyes and firmly localised with sufficient realistic tangibility to enable us to recognise the town indicated by the author as the "average imperial city M." In this respect we expected more distinctly Frankfurt (or Wetzlar) details than those supplied.

VIII

It is an oft-confirmed observation that authors seldom improve their works when, in later years, they attempt to recast them. When Moerike talked of his plan for the remodelling of his "Maler Nolten," such judicious friends as Theodor Storm, Paul Heyse and Berthold Auerbach were all emphatically opposed. He had lost, so they maintained, his right of disposal over a work which already belonged to the history of literature; and it was impracticable "to correct a youthful mood from an older one." As we know, he defied this warning, but there are, indeed, few readers who in all parts prefer the altered romance to its earlier form. And it has been exactly the same with Gottfried Keller's "Gruener Heinrich," and with the poems of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer. When Heine debated the question with himself whether he should make changes in certain parts of his "Reisebilder," he at once rejected the idea on the ground that all which had been written for years has an inherent right to remain unaltered. And Goethe himself observes in "Werther" that, by a second modified version of a story (already submitted to the reading public), no matter how much better it may be poetically, an author is certain to injure his work. Yet in spite of this, Goethe again and again recast his own works, both published and unpublished, and sometimes very radically, viz.: "Goetz," "Werther," the Gretchen tragedy of "Faust," his opera of "Erwin und Elmira," "Claudine von Villabella," "Iphigenia" and "Tasso." And in these cases he not seldom sacrificed beauties of poetry to exigencies of technical considerations.

One would therefore be inclined to expect that the original version of "Meister" should stand higher as a *poetic* production than its later form. But here we must be cautious, and not allow the ecstasy of our joy over a newly discovered gem

INTRODUCTION

to make us unjust towards the printed work. We think, therefore, that one critic of the Billeter MS. went too far in speaking of the "sin against the holy spirit of inspiration, whereby Goethe with scissors and paste transformed a book of confessions into a well-tempered romance." On the contrary, to an impartial judgement, there can be no manner of doubt that, on the whole, the "Apprenticeship" stands considerably higher as a work of art than the "Theatrical Mission." For obvious reasons I have here emphasised those points in which the original "Meister" seems to be superior. But in its reconstructed form the most direct parts of the romance, those richest in colour and in the freshness of youth, are precisely those which correspond to the First Book of the original version. Indeed some critics—*e.g.* J. B. Widmann—prefer the opening scenes of the "Apprenticeship," which reveal at once with dramatic vitality the love episode of Wilhelm and Mariana at its highest point, to the more epic narrative of the "Theatrical Mission." The surgical operation to which it was subjected by Goethe, and which cost nearly a third part of its contents, was violent and cruel enough, and here and there the poet has cut right into its living flesh. Yet, on the whole, one cannot sufficiently admire the artistic sense of purpose wherewith Goethe carried out the difficult task of erasure, with which, for instance, he cut out unorganic matter as far as possible, such as the excessively long dramaturgic explanations of the Second Book, or sketchily rounded off what remains, so as everywhere to give prominence in all their simplicity of outline to the essential, to bring out more clearly the broad lines and distinct contour of his story. Although his language has "grown older" with him, and a certain duality of style is perceptible, yet with what mastery he sometimes wields the old tone, and understands how to replace good matter with equally good, or even better stuff! If, therefore, we were obliged to choose between the two versions, to say whether we would have the more intimate torso of the original "Meister" or the inexhaustible world-picture and completed masterpiece of the "Apprenticeship"—our answer could not for a moment remain doubtful.

But it would be unjust to both versions if, when comparing them in details, we were to pit one against the other. For the

INTRODUCTION

second is not a mere reconstruction of the first, and textual criticism of their variations is no sufficient apparatus for appraising their value. Michael Bernay's words respecting "Werther" are also true here: "We can only be just to both versions when we regard them as monuments of two distinct artistic epochs of Goethe's poetry." We have to do with two different works, one fragmentary and the other complete; let us then rejoice with all our hearts in so rich a double possession.

It is probable that, after reconstruction, Goethe himself destroyed the manuscript of the "Theatrical Mission." Why did he do so? Two couplets from his "Tame Epigrams" may perhaps supply the answer:

"Let us, what thou'st half achieved—
Me and others—learn it!"
Since thereby we're but deceived,
Come then, now we'll burn it.

Other poets have also frequently and sternly spoken against later revelation of rejected matter. The author of "Gruener Heinrich" is said to have grimly growled: "May the hand which brings the old version into print be withered!" and from the same Gottfried Keller we have the lines:

"That heap of scribbled waste to fire we doom,
The rubbish of the workshop may decay!
Precious in art's domain are light and room;
Let not its dust then block the workman's way."

And yet Keller did not cast his fragmentary tragedy of "Therese" into the fire, but spared it! And Goethe, as soon as he began to treat himself historically, carefully saved up everything which seemed at all likely to reveal more clearly his development. By the priceless collections thus left behind he became himself the founder of that Goethe philology which some justly, but many more with great injustice, so bitterly inveigh against. But here we have to do not only with a fresh item of Goethe-philology, not alone with a literary curiosity of scientific interest to the amateur, or with new material for profound conjecture or learned discussion, but are presented with a new work by a truly great poet, a work breathing its own charm and magic, and which signifies a new purport, not only for our literary history, but also for our lives.

INTRODUCTION

IX

THE text of this version, and that of the Bibliophile's Edition issued a little earlier by the same publishers, agree with the great Weimar Edition of Goethe. I have handed over my critical and annotated edition of the original "Meister" for inclusion in Volumes 51 and 52 of this issue, in which form it will shortly appear. The manuscript is now the property of the Goethe and Schiller Archives at Weimar, and will be found fully described in the above publication. It consists of over 600 closely-written pages, and is in excellent preservation. As already stated, this is not the original handwriting of Goethe, but simply a copy of a dictated document, which has not been carefully revised, so that between the actual original and our copy several intermediate links are lacking. In this way much primitive matter has been effaced; and great as is the value of our manuscript, yet it is by no means a sufficient substitute for the literal first form of Goethe's work, which in many places only glimmers through it as through a palimpsest. The mode of speech displays so much which runs entirely counter to Goethe's customary language, and may rather be set to the account of the lady copyists, that we are fully justified in being somewhat sceptical. A slavish reproduction of this not very authoritative copy, in which so many liberties have been taken, many errors and faults of copying made, would not only be distasteful to the non-philologist, but also philologically unjustifiable. A revision was therefore indispensably necessary.

One of our most prominent representatives of Germanic philology has characterised the editing of the original "Meister" as a task in textual criticism, "such as modern philology has scarcely equalled for difficulty." In the Weimar Edition I have fully expounded the editorial principles which guided me in studying this text, and must refer my readers to the same, especially as in many cases I have treated the text itself very conservatively, and rather thought it best to raise many—even very obvious—conjectures only in my critical survey of the various readings.

Here, then, I will merely express my heartfelt thanks for all the help rendered to me in my work. This I owe in the first

INTRODUCTION

place to my esteemed colleague, Mr. Billeter, of Zürich, who from first to last has loyally assisted me with most unselfish co-operation. Aided by E. Gagliardi and E. Howald, of Zürich, he not only prepared a transcript of the manuscript, such as, after critical revision, I could use to print from, but has also taken a prominent part in the wearisome task of correcting the three editions, and I am indebted to him for many a valuable emendation and conjecture contained in the body of the Weimar issue. The same is also true of Mr. Erich Schmidt of Berlin, Mr. Edward Schroeder of Goettingen, Mr. S. Singer of Berne, and Mr. Julius Wahle of Weimar. I am moreover deeply indebted to Miss Jenny Usteri and Professor Dr. G. von Schulthess-Rechberg of Zürich for information as to details of fact.

HARRY MAYNE.

TO THE READER.

THESE two Translations, *Meister's Apprenticeship* and *Meister's Travels*, have long been out of print, but never altogether out of demand; nay, it would seem, the originally somewhat moderate demand has gone on increasing, and continues to increase. They are, therefore, here republished; and the one being in some sort a sequel to the other, though in rather unexpected sort, they are now printed together. The English version of *Meister's Travels* has been extracted, or extricated, from a Compilation of very various quality named *German Romance*; and placed by the side of the *Apprenticeship*, its forerunner, which, in the translated as in the original state, appeared hitherto as a separate work.

In the *Apprenticeship*, the first of these Translations, which was executed some fifteen years ago, under questionable auspices, I have made many little changes; but could not, unfortunately, change it into a right translation: it hung, in many places, stiff and labored, too like some unfortunate buckram cloak round the light, harmonious movement of the original; and, alas! still hangs so, here and there; and may now hang. In the second Translation, *Meister's Travels*, two years later in date, I have changed little or nothing. I might have added much; for the original, since that time, was as it were taken to pieces by the Author himself in his last years, and constructed anew; and in the Final Edition of his Works appears with multifarious intercalations, giving a great expansion both of size and of scope. Not Pedagogy only, and Husbandry and Art and Religion and Human Conduct in the Nineteenth Century, but Geology, Astronomy, Cotton-spinning, Metallurgy, Anatomical Lecturing, and much else, are typically shadowed forth in this second form of the *Travels*; which, however, continues a Fragment like the first, significantly pointing on all hands towards infinitude; not more complete than the first was, or indeed perhaps less so. It will well reward the trustful student of Goethe to read this new form of the *Travels*; and see how in that

great mind, beaming in mildest mellow splendor, beaming if also trembling, like a great sun on the verge of the horizon, near now to its long farewell, all these things were illuminated and illustrated: but for the mere English reader there are probably in our prior edition of the *Travels* already novelties enough; for us, at all events, it seemed unadvisable to meddle with it further at present.

Goethe's position towards the English Public is greatly altered since these Translations first made their appearance. Criticisms, near the mark, or farther from the mark, or even altogether far, and away from any mark; of these there has been enough. These pass on their road; the man and his works remain what they are and were; more and more recognizable for what they are. Few English readers can require now to be apprised that these two Books, named *Novels*, come not under the Minerva-Press category, nor the Ballantyne-Press category, nor any such category; that the Author is one whose secret, by no means worn upon his sleeve, will never, by any ingenuity, be got at in that way.

For a Translator, in the present case, it is enough to reflect that he who imports into his own country any true delineation, a rationally spoken word on any subject, has done well. Ours is a wide world, peaceably admitting many different modes of speech. In our wide world, there is but one altogether fatal personage; the dunce; he that speaks *irrationally*, that sees not, and yet thinks he sees. A genuine seer and speaker, under what conditions soever, shall be welcome to us: has he not *seen* somewhat of great Nature our common Mother's bringing forth; seen it, loved it, laid his heart open to it and to the Mother of it, so that he can now rationally speak it for us? He is our brother, and a good, not a bad man; his words are like gold, precious, whether stamped in our mint, or in what mint soever stamped.

T. CARLYLE

LONDON, November, 1839.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST EDITION OF MEISTER'S APPRENTICESHIP.

[EDINBURGH, 1824.]

WHETHER it be that the quantity of genius among ourselves and the French, and the number of works more lasting than brass produced by it, have of late been so considerable as to make us independent of additional supplies; or that, in our ancient aristocracy of intellect, we disdain to be assisted by the Germans, whom, by a species of second sight, we have discovered, before knowing anything about them, to be a tumid, dreaming, extravagant, insane race of mortals; certain it is, that hitherto our literary intercourse with that nation has been very slight and precarious. After a brief period of not too judicious cordiality, the acquaintance on our part was altogether dropped: nor, in the few years since we partially resumed it, have our feelings of affection or esteem been materially increased. Our translators are unfortunate in their selection or execution, or the public is tasteless and absurd in its demands; for, with scarcely more than one or two exceptions, the best works of Germany have lain neglected, or worse than neglected, and the Germans are yet utterly unknown to us. Kotzebue still lives in our minds as the representative of a nation that despises him; Schiller is chiefly known to us by the monstrous production of his boyhood; and Klopstock by a hacked and mangled image of his *Messias*, in which a beautiful poem is distorted into a theosophic rhapsody, and the brother of Virgil and Racine ranks little higher than the author of *Meditations among the Tombs*.

But of all these people there is none that has been more unjustly dealt with than Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. For half a century the admiration, we might almost say the idol, of his countrymen, to us

he is still a stranger. His name, long echoed and re-echoed through reviews and magazines, has become familiar to our ears: but it is a sound and nothing more; it excites no definite idea in almost any mind. To such as know him by the faint and garbled version of his *Werter*, Goethe figures as a sort of poetic Heraclitus; some woebegone hypochondriac, whose eyes are overflowing with perpetual tears, whose long life has been spent in melting into ecstasy at the sight of waterfalls, and clouds, and the moral sublime, or dissolving into hysterical wailings over hapless love-stories and the miseries of human life. They are not aware that Goethe smiles at this performance of his youth; or that the German *Werter*, with all his faults, is a very different person from his English namesake; that his Sorrows are in the original recorded in a tone of strength and sarcastic emphasis, of which the other offers no vestige, and intermingled with touches of powerful thought, glimpses of a philosophy deep as it is bitter, which our sagacious translator has seen proper wholly to omit. Others again, who have fallen in with Retsch's *Outlines* and the extracts from *Faust*, consider Goethe as a wild mystic, a dealer in demonology and osteology, who draws attention by the aid of skeletons and evil spirits, whose excellence it is to be extravagant, whose chief aim it is to do what no one but himself has tried. The tyro in German may tell us that the charm of *Faust* is altogether unconnected with its preternatural import; that the work delineates the fate of human enthusiasm struggling against doubts and errors from within, against scepticism, contempt, and selfishness from without; and that the witchcraft and magic, intended merely as a shadowy frame for so complex and mysterious a picture of the moral world and the human soul, are introduced for the purpose not so much of being trembled at as laughed at. The voice of the tyro is not listened to; our indolence takes part with our ignorance; *Faust* continues to be called a monster; and Goethe is regarded as a man of "some genius," which he has perverted to produce all manner of misfashioned prodigies; things false, abortive, formless, Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimeras dire.

Now, it must no doubt be granted, that so long as our invaluable constitution is preserved in its pristine purity, the British nation may exist in a state of comparative prosperity with very inadequate ideas of Goethe: but, at the same time, the present arrangement is an evil in its kind; slight, it is true, and easy to be borne, yet still more easy to be remedied, and which, therefore, ought to have been remedied ere now. Minds like Goethe's are the common property of all nations; and, for many reasons, all should have correct impressions of them.

• It is partly with the view of doing something to supply this want, that *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre* is now presented to the English public. Written in its Author's forty-fifth year, embracing hints or disquisitions on almost every leading point in life and literature, it affords us a more distinct view of his matured genius, his manner of thought, and favorite subjects, than any of his other works. Nor is it Goethe alone whom it portrays; the prevailing taste of Germany is likewise indicated by it. Since the year 1795, when it first appeared at Berlin, numerous editions of *Meister* have been printed: critics of all ranks, and some of them dissenting widely from its doctrines, have loaded it with encomiums; its songs and poems are familiar to every German ear; the people read it, and speak of it, with an admiration approaching in many cases to enthusiasm.

That it will be equally successful in England, I am far indeed from anticipating. Apart from the above considerations, from the curiosity, intelligent or idle, which it may awaken, the number of admiring, or even approving, judges it will find can scarcely fail of being very limited. To the great mass of readers, who read to drive away the tedium of mental vacancy, employing the crude phantasmagoria of a modern novel, as their grandfathers employed tobacco and diluted brandy, *Wilhelm Meister* will appear beyond endurance weary, flat, stale, and unprofitable. Those, in particular, who take delight in "King Cambyzes' vein," and open *Meister* with the thought of *Werter* in their minds, will soon pause in utter dismay, and their paroxysm of dismay will pass by degrees into unspeakable contempt. Of romance interest there is next to none in *Meister*; the characters are samples to judge of, rather than persons to love or hate; the incidents are contrived for other objects than moving or affrighting us; the hero is a milksop, whom, with all his gifts, it takes an effort to avoid despising. The author himself, far from "doing it in a passion," wears a face of the most still indifference throughout the whole affair; often it is even wrinkled by a slight sardonic grin. For the friends of the sublime, then, for those who cannot do without heroical sentiments, and "moving accidents by flood and field," there is nothing here that can be of any service.

Nor among readers of a far higher character, can it be expected that many will take the praiseworthy pains of Germans, reverential of their favorite author, and anxious to hunt out his most elusive charms. Few among us will disturb themselves about the allegories and typical allusions of the work; will stop to inquire whether it includes a remote emblem of human culture, or includes no such

matter; whether this is a light, airy sketch of the development of man in all his endowments and faculties, gradually proceeding from the first rude exhibitions of puppets and mountebanks, through the perfection of poetic and dramatic art, up to the unfolding of the principle of religion, and the greatest of all arts, the art of life,—or is nothing more than a bungled piece of patch-work, presenting in the shape of a novel much that should have been suppressed entirely, or at least given out by way of lecture. Whether the characters do or do not represent distinct classes of men, including various stages of human nature, from the gay material vivacity of Philina to the severe moral grandeur of the Uncle and the splendid accomplishment of Lothario, will to most of us be of small importance: and the everlasting disquisitions about plays and players, and politeness and activity, and art and nature, will weary many a mind that knows not and heeds not whether they are true or false. Yet every man's judgment is, in this free country, a lamp to himself: whoever is displeased will censure; and many, it is to be feared, will insist on judging *Meister* by the common rule, and what is worse, condemning it, let Schlegel bawl as loudly as he pleases. "To judge," says he, "of this book,—new and peculiar as it is, and only to be understood and learned from itself, by our common notion of the novel, a notion pieced together and produced out of custom and belief, out of accidental and arbitrary requisitions,—is as if a child should grasp at the moon and stars, and insist on packing them into its toy-box."* Unhappily the most of us have boxes; and some of them are very small!

Yet, independently of these its more recondite and dubious qualities, there are beauties in *Meister* which cannot but secure it some degree of favor at the hands of many. The philosophical discussions it contains; its keen glances into life and art; the minute and skillful delineation of men; the lively, genuine exhibition of the scenes they move in; the occasional touches of eloquence and tenderness, and even of poetry, the very essence of poetry; the quantity of thought and knowledge embodied in a style so rich in general felicities, of which, at least, the new and sometimes exquisitely happy metaphors have been preserved,—cannot wholly escape an observing reader, even on the most cursory perusal. To those who have formed for themselves a picture of the world, who have drawn out, from the thousand variable circumstances of their being, a philosophy of life, it will be interesting and instructive to see how man and his concerns are represented in the first of European minds: to those who have

* Charakteristik des Meister.

penetrated to the limits of their own conceptions, and wrestled with thoughts and feelings too high for them, it will be pleasing and profitable to see the horizon of their certainties widened, or at least separated with a firmer line from the impalpable obscure which surrounds it on every side. Such persons I can fearlessly invite to study *Meister*. Across the disfigurement of a translation, they will not fail to discern indubitable traces of the greatest genius in our times. And the longer they study, they are likely to discern them the more distinctly. New charms will successively arise to view; and of the many apparent blemishes, while a few superficial ones may be confirmed, the greater and more important part will vanish, or even change from dark to bright. For, if I mistake not, it is with *Meister* as with every work of real and abiding excellence, the first glance is the least favorable. A picture of Raphael, a Greek statuë, a play of Sophocles or Shakespeare, appears insignificant to the unpractised eye; and not till after long and patient and intense examination, do we begin to desery the earnest features of that beauty, which has its foundation in the deepest nature of man, and will continue to be pleasing through all ages.

If this appear excessive praise, as applied in any sense to *Meister*, the curious sceptic is desired to read and weigh the whole performance, with all its references, relations, purposes; and to pronounce his verdict after he has clearly seized and appreciated them all. Or if a more faint conviction will suffice, let him turn to the picture of Wilhelm's states of mind in the end of the first Book, and the beginning of the second; the eulogies of commerce and poesy, which follow; the description of Hamlet; the character of histrionic life in Serlo and Aurelia; that of sedate and lofty manhood in the Uncle and Lothario. But, above all, let him turn to the history of Mignon. This mysterious child, at first neglected by the reader, gradually forced on his attention, at length overpowers him with an emotion more deep and thrilling than any poet since the days of Shakespeare has succeeded in producing. The daughter of enthusiasm, rapture, passion, and despair, she is of the earth, but not earthly. When she glides before us through the light mazes of her fairy dance, or twangs her cithern to the notes of her homesick verses, or whirls her tambourine and hurries round us like an antique Mænad, we could almost fancy her a spirit; so pure is she, so full of fervor, so disengaged from the clay of this world. And when all the fearful particulars of her story are at length laid together, and we behold in connected order the image of her hapless existence, there is, in those dim recollections, those feelings so simple, so impassioned and unspeakable, consuming the closely-shrouded, woe-struck,

yet ethereal spirit of the poor creature, something which searches into the inmost recesses of the soul. It is not tears which her fate calls forth; but a feeling far too deep for tears. The very fire of heaven seems miserably quenched among the obstructions of this earth. Her little heart, so noble and so helpless, perishes before the smallest of its many beauties is unfolded; and all its loves, and thoughts, and longings, do but add another pang to death, and sink to silence utter and eternal. It is as if the gloomy porch of Dis, and his pale kingdoms, were realized and set before us, and we heard the ineffectual wail of infants reverberating from within their prison-walls forever.

“Continuò auditæ voces, vagitus et ingens,
 Infantumque animæ fientes in limine primo:
 Quos dulcis vitæ exsortes, et ab ubere raptos,
 Abstulit atra dies, et funere mersit acerbo.”

The history of *Mignon* runs like a thread of gold through the tissue of the narrative, connecting with the heart much that were else addressed only to the head. Philosophy and eloquence might have done the rest; but this is poetry in the highest meaning of the word. It must be for the power of producing such creations and emotions, that Goethe is by many of his countrymen ranked at the side of Homer and Shakespeare, as one of the only three men of genius that have ever lived.

But my business here is not to judge of *Meister* or its author, it is only to prepare others for judging it; and for this purpose the most that I had room to say is said. All I ask in the name of this illustrious foreigner is, that the court which tries him be pure, and the jury instructed in the cause; that the work be not condemned for wanting what it was not meant to have, and by persons nowise called to pass sentence on it.

Respecting my own humble share in the adventure, it is scarcely necessary to say anything. Fidelity is all the merit I have aimed at: to convey the author's sentiments, as he himself expressed them; to follow the original, in all the variations of its style, has been my constant endeavor. In many points, both literary and moral, I could have wished devoutly that he had not written as he has done; but to alter anything was not in my commission. The literary and moral persuasions of a man like Goethe are objects of a rational curiosity; and the duty of a translator is simple and distinct. Accordingly, except a few phrases and sentences, not in all amounting to a page, which I have dropped as evidently unfit for the English taste, I have studied to pre-

sent the work exactly as it stands in German. That my success has been indifferent, I already know too well. In rendering the ideas of Goethe, often so subtle, so capriciously expressive, the meaning was not always easy to seize, or to convey with adequate effect. There were thin tints of style, shades of ridicule or tenderness, or solemnity, resting over large spaces, and so slight as almost to be evanescent: some of these I may have failed to see; to many of them I could do no justice. Nor, even in plainer matters, can I pride myself in having always imitated his colloquial familiarity without falling into sentences bald and rugged, into idioms harsh or foreign; or in having copied the flowing oratory of other passages, without at times exaggerating or defacing the swelling cadences and phrases of my original. But what work, from the translating of a German novel to the writing of an epic, was ever as the workman wished and meant it? This version of *Meister*, with whatever faults it may have, I honestly present to my countrymen: if, while it makes any portion of them more familiar with the richest, most gifted of living minds, it increase their knowledge, or even afford them a transient amusement, they will excuse its errors, and I shall be far more than paid for all my labor.

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WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION FIRST BOOK

CHAPTER I

It was a few days before Christmas Eve, 174—, that Benedict Meister, citizen and merchant of M—, a moderate sized imperial city, returned home about eight o'clock from his club. The party of "tarock" players had broken up earlier than usual, and he was not quite pleased to come back so soon to the four walls of his house, which his wife had not exactly converted into a paradise. It was scarcely time yet for the evening meal, and such intervals she was not accustomed to fill up with pleasantries, so that he preferred to appear at table when the soup was a little overdone.

As he slowly sauntered along, thinking of the office of burghermaster he had filled last year, or of business and its small profits, he noticed in passing that his mother's windows were brightly illuminated. After setting up her son and handing over her business to him, the old lady lived retired in a small house, where, with one servant, she existed very comfortably on her considerable means. For her children and grandchildren she now and then procured sundry pleasures, but saved up the best until after her death, when she hoped they would prove more prudent than she had found them during her life. Some secret impulse drew Meister to the house, for, when he knocked, the maid hastily and mysteriously opened the door and accompanied him upstairs. On entering the room he

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

found his mother busy at a large table engaged in clearing away and covering up, and to his "Good evening" she answered that his coming was not quite convenient. "But since you are here," she added, "you may as well know; so look what I am preparing." With these words she removed the napkins spread over the board, and lifted also a fur mantle which had been hastily flung across the table, thereby revealing a number of span-long, prettily dressed dolls, which lay side by side in perfect order, each with a moveable wire affixed to its head, and seeming only to await the spirit which should set them all in motion.

"What have you got here then, mother?" said Meister.

"A Christmas treat for your children!" replied the old lady. "If it only provides them as much sport as it has given me in the preparing, I shall be well content."

He examined them for some time, and, apparently, with care, so as not at once to grieve her by seeming to think her work in vain.

"Dear mother," said he at last, "children are children; you give yourself too much trouble, and I do not see what good it will do after all."

"Never you mind," replied the other, as she rearranged the clothes of the dolls, which had been slightly displaced. "Let me alone; it was always my way, as you know, and I must keep it up. When you were little you were brim full of excitement, and trotted around all through the holidays with your toys and sweetmeats. And now your children shall have the same; I am their grandmother and know what to do for them."

"I won't spoil it for you," said Meister, "I was only wondering what good it will do the children to give it them one day more than another. If they want anything, I will give it them; and why should it be at Christmas? There are folks who let their children go in rags, and save up everything for that day."

"Benedict," replied the old lady, "I have dressed the dolls for them and prepared a play, for children must have

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

dolls and plays. It was so when you were a child. I spent many a penny to let you see Doctor Faust and the Moorish ballet. I cannot tell what you intend with your children, if they are not to have as good as you had."

"Who is this meant for?" said Meister, picking up one of the dolls.

"Don't entangle the wires!" said the elder. "It costs more trouble than you would think to arrange them all. See, this is King Saul. You mustn't think I am wasting money. The bits of stuff they are dressed in I had in my drawers, and as for the scraps of gilt and tinsel with which I have smartened them, surely I may spend a trifle to please the bairns."

"The puppets are right pretty," said Meister.

"I should think they are!" laughed the other, "and cost very little. Merks, the old crippled sculptor, who has owed me so long the rent of his cottage, had to carve me the hands, feet and faces; for I shall never get any money from him and cannot turn him out, for he has been our tenant ever since your father's time, and always paid up regularly until his unlucky second marriage."

"And so this one in black velvet, and with a golden crown, is Saul?" enquired Meister. "Who, then, are the others?"

"You must see them when they are all ready," replied his mother. "This is Jonathan; he wears red and yellow because he is young and giddy, and I have given him a turban. That other is Samuel, and has cost me most trouble with his little breast-plate. Look at his jacket. It is made of shot taffeta which I wore as a girl."

"Good night," answered Meister, "it is just striking eight."

"But look at David first!" said the old lady. "Isn't he a beauty! carved throughout and with red hair; see how small he is and how pretty!"

"Where is Goliath, then?" said Meister; "he is sure to come on."

"He's not ready yet," replied the elder. "He is going to be a masterpiece. If only all were ready! The theatre

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

is being made by the Police Lieutenant¹ and his brother. Over there, ready for the dance, are shepherds and shepherdesses, with Moors and dwarfs, both male and female. I promise you it will be very pretty ! Let me alone and say nothing about it at home, and, above all, don't let Wilhelm come running here. It will suit him famously, for I well remember when I sent him last fair to the marionette show, how he told me all about it and seemed to understand it all."

"You're giving yourself too much trouble," replied Meister, as he moved towards the door.

"If I had taken no trouble with my children, how do you think you would ever have grown up ?" answered the grandmother.

The maid took a candle and led him downstairs.

CHAPTER II

CHRISTMAS EVE drew on with all its solemnities. The children ran about all day or stood at the window, in eager impatience for evening. At last they were summoned and entered the room, where each received with rapturous delight his brilliantly illuminated share of good things. Each had already taken possession of his own, and, after due examination, was preparing to carry it off into a corner or to some place of safety, when an unforeseen spectacle attracted every eye. The door leading to a neighbouring room opened of itself ; but not as usual for running in and out. The entrance was filled with the promise of a further treat. A green carpet, hanging over a table, completely covered the lower part of the opening, above which rose a portico bedecked also by a mystic curtain, while the remaining space up to the lintel of the doorway was filled in with dark green stuff which shut off the whole. At first the children all stood at a distance, but as curiosity drew them on to see what glittered behind the

¹ Elsewhere described as an Artillery Lieutenant.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

curtain, each was directed to his chair and kindly told to wait in patience. Wilhelm was the only one who remained at a reverential distance, and had to be told twice or thrice by his grandmother before he took his place. And so they all sat quite still, when at the sound of a whistle up rolled the curtain, and displayed a bright, red-coloured scene in the temple. There they saw the high priest Samuel and Jonathan, whose alternating voices quite enraptured their small listeners. Then appeared Saul, in great indignation over the impertinence wherewith the heavy-limbed rascal had challenged him and his men. Imagine the delight of our Wilhelm, who listened to every word and drank it all in, as the diminutive and wiry son of Jesse stepped forward with his shepherd's crook, his bag and sling, and spoke: "Most mighty King and Lord! Let no man's heart fail because of this Philistine. If your Majesty permit, I will go and fight the great giant." This ended the act. All the other children burst into eager chatter. Wilhelm alone waited for the rest and pondered what he had seen. He was anxious to see the giant and know how all would end.

Once more the curtain ascended. David forthwith devoted the flesh of the monster to the fowls of heaven and the beasts of the field. The Philistine denounced him with scorn, stamped a good deal with both feet, and fell at last like a clod, thus bringing the affair to a magnificent conclusion. Next behold the virgins as they sang: "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands!" and then how the giant's head was carried before his little vanquisher, who received the lovely royal daughter to wife. Yet amid all his joy Wilhelm was troubled that the fortunate young prince should be so dwarfish of stature; for, according to her idea of big Goliath and little David, his dear grandmother had not failed to make them both true to character. The rapt attention of the other children lasted without interruption; but Wilhelm fell into a reverie, amid which the ballet of male and female Moors, shepherds and dwarfs capered before him like so many shadows. The curtain fell, the door was closed, and

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

the whole little company had been hustled, bewildered and eager, to bed. Only Wilhelm, who must needs go with them for company, lay alone, mystified by what had happened, musing and dissatisfied amid his pleasure, full of hope, of ardent longing and anticipation.

CHAPTER III

NEXT day everything had vanished. The mystic veil had been lifted, and one could freely pass from room to room by that very door through which on the previous evening such wondrous adventures had been viewed. The others played about with their toys ; Wilhelm alone crept hither and thither, as though seeking some lost love, as though he felt it almost impossible that only two doorposts should remain where yesterday so much magic had been displayed. He begged his mother to let him have it played over again, but only got a harsh answer, because she could find no joy in the fun provided by the grandmother for her children, which seemed like a reproach on her own unmotherliness. I am sorry to have to say it, but the fact is true, that this woman, who had borne her husband five children—two sons and three daughters, of whom Wilhelm was the eldest—had with advancing years conceived a passion for an insipid man, and her husband, who was aware of the truth, could not endure the fellow. As a natural consequence, neglect, trouble and mutual bickering crept into the household, and had the husband not been an honest, upright burgher, and his mother a prudent and sensible woman, the family would have been disgraced by a shameful action for divorce. In all this the poor children were the worst sufferers ; for as such helpless beings fly to the mother when father is unkind, so here, on the other side, they were in a doubly hard fix ; for, in her dissatisfaction, their mother was generally in a bad temper, and even when this was not the case, was sure to rail against her husband, glad of a chance to magnify his

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

sternness, asperity and morose demeanour. Sometimes this hurt Wilhelm acutely. He merely asked protection against his father, or consolation when he had treated him harshly ; but that they should depreciate his father he could not bear, or that his complaints should be misinterpreted as evidence against a man whom in his heart he dearly loved. Thus the boy became estranged from his mother, and was most unfortunately situated, because his father also was a hard man ; so that nothing seemed left for him but to creep into himself, a fate which with children and old folks is of serious consequence.

CHAPTER IV

THUS for some time Wilhelm's childish existence pursued its way. His thoughts often turned back to that happy Christmas Eve, and he delighted to look at pictures or to read fairy and heroic stories. Meanwhile his grandmother, who did not wish to have taken so much pains for nothing, arranged that, on the long-delayed visit of some neighbours' children, the puppet theatre should be again erected and the play once more repeated.

If on the first occasion Wilhelm had the joy of surprise and wonder, this second time he had the rapture of observation and enquiry. How the business was managed, that was what he sought to know. That it was not the dolls who spoke he had already determined from the first ; and that they did not move themselves, this question, too, he did not allow to puzzle him. But how everything came to look so nice, and to seem as if each figure really spoke, and moved of itself—all this was an enigma, which disturbed him all the more as his desire increased to be among both the bewitched and the bewitchers, at once to have his hand secretly in the game, and yet as spectator to share the joy experienced by the other children. The play was ended, and the dance in full swing, as he slyly attempted to approach the screen. Scarcely had the curtain fallen, and

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

attention been diverted, than he perceived by the clatter that someone was busy removing the apparatus. So lifting up the lower carpet, he peeped between the table legs. A maid servant spied him from behind and drew him back ; but in that momentary glimpse he had seen them packing friends and foes, Saul and Goliath, Moors and dwarfs into a drawer, and the sight was fresh food for his half-sated curiosity. As children at a certain period, when first made conscious of sex differences, feel the stirrings of wonderful emotions throughout their nature, excited by a glimpse beyond the veil which hides these secrets, so was it with Wilhelm after his discovery ; he was quieter yet more restless than before, fancied he had learnt something, only to find thereby that he knew nothing.

CHAPTER V

IN a well-arranged and well-ordered house the children are pretty much like rats and mice ; they keep a sharp look-out for all cracks and holes in which to discover some forbidden delicacy. When found, they enjoy it with a kind of stolen delightful fearfulness, which, I believe, makes a great part of their childish enjoyment. Wilhelm was much quicker than any of his brothers or sisters to notice whenever a key was left in a lock. The greater the veneration he bore in his heart for those closed doors before which he had to pass for weeks and months, and through which he could only steal a surreptitious glance when his mother opened the shrine to take something from its treasures, so much greater the avidity wherewith he seized a chance when afforded by the housekeeper's carelessness. But among all doors, as may well be imagined, that upon which his senses were most keenly directed was the door of the pantry. Few premonitory joys of life equalled the sensation with which he sometimes obeyed his mother's call to carry something for her from its shelves, when a few dried plums were the reward, either of

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

her kindness or his own dexterity. The piled-up treasures filled his imagination with their abundance, and even the unpleasant odour arising from so many mixed emanations, such as soap, candles, lemons and many old and new canisters, so made his mouth water that he never passed, even within several paces of the place, without revelling in its delicious exhalations. His mother having one Sunday morning been taken unawares by the church bells, and the whole house lying in profound Sabbath stillness, he discovered this wonderful key projecting from its lock. No sooner had Wilhelm perceived it than he proceeded to walk gently twice or thrice past the door, then, quietly and slowly approaching, opened it, and in a single step found himself in presence of all its long-coveted delights. Casting a rapid and questioning glance over boxes, bags, cases, tins and glasses, that he might decide what to choose and take, he finally selected some of his dearly loved dry plums. To these he also added a few dried apples and modestly annexed a single piece of candied lemon, with which plunder he prepared cautiously to retreat, when his eyes fell upon two dressers standing side by side, from one of which a couple of wires, furnished at the ends with hooks, projected through an ill-fitting drawer. On these he pounced with glad anticipation; when, oh, with what more than earthly bliss, he discovered that packed within lay his enchanted world of heroes. He wanted to take out and examine the uppermost and then pick up the bottom ones, but soon entangled the slender wires and grew fearful and uneasy, especially as he heard the cook moving about in the adjoining kitchen. So hastily thrusting them all back again as well as he could, he pushed the drawer in, contenting himself merely with taking a written pamphlet containing the play of David and Goliath, with which prize he noiselessly crept upstairs to his little chamber in the roof.

From that time forth he spent every stolen hour of loneliness in reading his tragedy through and through, so as to learn it by heart and picture to himself how glorious it would be if only he could move the figures themselves

with his fingers. In fancy he himself became both David and Goliath, acting first one character and then the other all alone. And, in passing, I cannot leave unnoticed the magical effect which garrets, stables and secret chambers often have upon children, in which, freed from the weight of their teachers' presence, they revel in the fact of being alone, a sensation which in later years slowly passes away, yet sometimes returns again, when places of unclean necessity must provide the secret chancellery for unhappy lovers. In such places and under such circumstances Wilhelm studied the piece until he had thoroughly absorbed it, seized every part and learnt it by heart, though naturally putting himself mainly in the place of the chief hero and regarding the rest as satellites, who merely moved around the other in his memory. Thus the valorous speeches of David, in which he challenged the gigantic Goliath, lay day and night in his thought, and he often murmured them to himself as he went about ; but nobody took any notice, except his father, who, observing it once or twice, wondered much at the boy's memory, which after so few chances of hearing the play could retain so much of its language.

CHAPTER VI

ONE evening, the grandmother having sent for her Wilhelm, he sat in perfect silence making figures for himself out of cards, until at last he formed a Goliath and David, whom he erected and set to perorate against each other in fine style, when finally Goliath received so shrewd a blow that his waxen feet came loose from the table and he fell full length on the board. At once his head was struck from the trunk, handed to the little grasshopper on a pin with a waxen handle, and a song of triumph raised. Meanwhile the old lady sat enchanted, listening with amazement to her grandson, and when he had done she began praising him and questioning whence he had obtained such ready skill. He already possessed a moderate gift of lying,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

tempered nevertheless by a clear perception of the occasions on which he need not lie. He confessed therefore to his kind grandmother that he had abstracted the little book, but earnestly begged her to be his protector and not betray him, promising neither to dirty nor lose it. The old lady promised, and with the verbal promise made yet another, both to him and to herself, namely, that she would persuade his father to allow the son to produce the great drama himself, assisted by the artillery lieutenant, and in presence of some gathering of children. She forbade Wilhelm to mention the matter any further, and a few days later set about the negotiations, in which she met with sundry difficulties. The most serious of these was that her son had been reduced to an extremely bad state of temper by the continued evil conduct of his wife. The whole weight of business lay upon his shoulders, but his wife, instead of recognising this and seeking in some way to lighten the load, was the first to irritate him in misfortune, to misconstrue his actions, to magnify his mistakes and refuse recognition to that which was well done. This gave to the inborn commercial activity of his spirit a feeling of sadness, mingled of vain striving and working, such as the damned may feel in hell. And had it not been for his children, a look at whom gave him courage and conviction that he still had something in the world to work for, it would hardly have been possible for him to endure it. In such moods men lose almost all taste for childish joys, the invention and arrangement of which are indeed rather the mother's affair, and not the father's; and when she is a wretch, then little consolation is left for the family in what should be its most blessed years. In the present case it was the grandmother who provided this consolation. She so managed to arrange matters that two rooms of the third floor, in which there was nothing but a few cupboards, should be given over for the purpose. In one of these the spectators could sit, the other being reserved for the actors, while a view of the theatre would, as usual, be gained through the open doorway.

The elder man permitted everything to be arranged by

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

the grandmother ; he himself seemed only to watch, as it were, through his fingers, cherishing the idea that it was not wise to let children see how fond one is of them, lest they might learn to take liberties. One must appear serious amid their pleasures, and sometimes even mar them, lest they become over bold.

CHAPTER VII

THE lieutenant of artillery, who was godson to the grandmother, now received instructions to erect the theatre and have everything prepared. Wilhelm noticed all this, for during the week he repeatedly ran across to the house at unexpected hours. His longing only grew with what he saw, but he fully realised that he would not be allowed to take any part in the business before Saturday. At last the blissful Saturday appeared. At five o'clock the artillery lieutenant came to take Wilhelm upstairs with him. Trembling with joy, he entered the room, where on each side of the stage he beheld a row of puppets suspended in the order in which they were to appear. He examined them carefully, mounted the step which raised him above the theatre, so that he could hover over his little world. Not without reverence did he gaze down between the scenes, vividly remindful of the glorious impression it all made from without, and filled with a sense of the secrets into which he was being initiated. They held a rehearsal, which passed off splendidly.

Next day, for which a party of children had been invited, the performance was repeated, except that Wilhelm, in the excitement of action, let his Jonathan fall and had to reach down with his hand to recover him, which greatly weakened the illusion, causing loud laughter and wounding his feelings unspeakably. But this slip seemed particularly welcome to his father, who, although highly delighted to see his little son so capable, yet took good care not to reveal the fact, and when the piece was over fastened upon its faults, saying it had been well if this or that had not

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

miscarried. This grieved our prince inwardly, who went to bed sad, but by next morning had slept it all off and felt happy at the thought that, except for this mishap, he had done his part very well. And this was not mere fancy, for he had no pattern with which to compare himself except the lieutenant, who in changing from the rough to the softer voices had managed pretty well, although he spouted his lines stiffly and affectedly. Yet Wilhelm had exhibited a good, true and courageous spirit in the principal parts, as for instance in his challenge to Goliath and the modesty with which after his victory he appeared before the king.

CHAPTER VIII

ANYHOW, the theatre remained set up, and as it was now mild spring weather, and fires could be dispensed with, Wilhelm spent his free and play hours in the room, and let his puppets perform famously among themselves. He often invited his brother, sisters and comrades to join him, but was much more frequently quite alone. His imagination and vivacity brooded over this little world, which necessarily soon assumed another form. Scarcely had the first play, for which the theatre and actors were made and fashioned been produced for a few times, than it ceased to give him any pleasure. Among his father's books he had found the "*Deutsche Schaubuehne*" and several translated Italian operas, into which he plunged deeply, and, counting up first of all the characters, proceeded to produce the play. Thus it came about that King Saul in his black velvet robe had to stand for Chaumigrem, Cato and Darius; and at this point we must observe that the pieces were never given in entirety, but mostly only their fifth acts, in which the stabbing scenes occur. And, as could hardly fail to be the case, it was the operas, with their manifold changes and adventures, which most attracted him. In these he found storm-tossed seas, gods descending in clouds and—what made him happy beyond measure—thunder and lightning. He helped himself out with paste,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

paint and paper, and contrived many a glorious night. His lightning was dreadful to behold, and though the thunder did not always succeed, such trifles did not much matter. Moreover, in opera there was more opportunity for his David and Goliath, which in ordinary drama was less easy to find. Daily his devotion to the narrow space in which he partook of such manifold joys grew more intense, but I cannot omit to mention that the fragrance retained by the puppets from their sojourn in the pantry conduced not a little to this delight. His theatre was now fairly complete, and the fact that from childhood he had been used to playing with compasses, and cutting out and illuminating cardboard now proved of great assistance, so that it grieved him all the more when his characters often hindered him from greater performances. His sisters, whom he had often seen dress and undress their own dolls, suggested the idea of gradually providing his heroes also with removeable clothes. The bits of stuff were therefore detached from each body and stitched together as well as possible; a little money was saved for the purchase of new ribbons and spangles, they begged sundry scraps of taffeta, and thus by degrees made themselves a fresh theatrical wardrobe, in which hooped petticoats for the ladies were especially remembered. And now, being completely equipped for the greatest plays, one would imagine that play-acting would at last begin in real earnest. But it happened in this case as so often with children; they devise large plans, make extensive preparations and even a few experiments, yet everything is left just as it was. Precisely so it was with Wilhelm. His greatest delight lay only in invention and the power of the imagination. This or that play interested him for the sake of some particular scene, for which he at once had a new costume made. But in the very process the garments originally worn had become disarranged and tattered, so that not even the first piece could now be properly performed.

Owing to age and infirmity his grandmother kept her bed, and as no one else in the house paid him any attention,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

the theatre very speedily fell into grievous confusion. Wilhelm abandoned himself to his fancy, eternally experimenting and preparing, without being able to bring anything to completion. While building thousands of air castles, he failed to perceive that he had not yet laid the foundation of the first one.

CHAPTER IX

Now that his circle of comrades began to increase, the various diversions of youth tended also to invade these lonely and quiet pleasures. Along with other children he was by turns huntsman, soldier or horseman, as the nature of their games suggested; but in this always had an advantage over the rest that he knew how to prepare with skill the needful outfit. Thus the swords were usually from his factory, he adorned and gilded the sleighs, and by some secret instinct and old-time attachment soon managed to convert their militia to the antique. Helmets were constructed with paper plumes, shields and even suits of armour were made, devices upon which the household servants, who became his cutters and stitchers, broke many a needle. He now saw some of his young companions well equipped, and by degrees the other and less important were also rigged out, though less gaily, so that at last he had a truly stately company about him. They marched in court and garden, smote each other bravely on shield and helmet, and many a discord arose, which Wilhelm quickly sought to appease. After a few performances this game, which amused the others thoroughly, ceased to satisfy Wilhelm. The sight of so many mailed figures was bound to excite knightly thoughts in his mind, which, since he had lately taken to reading old romances, was full of such ideas. "Jerusalem Delivered," Koppen's translation of which had lately come into his hands, finally knocked the bung out of the cask. Though he could not quite read the poem, there

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

were passages which he knew by heart, and whose imagery ever floated before his mind. Especially did Chlorinda fascinate him by her whole conduct and action. The manly womanliness, the serene fulness of her being wrought more powerfully upon the nascent spirit of love which began to germinate within the lad, than all Armida's riper charms, although he by no means despised her garden. But hundreds and hundreds of times, as he stood by the window at evening, gazing into the garden, and beheld how the summer sun glided behind the mountains, while a tremulous glimmer flickered upon the horizon, the stars peeped forth, night crept out from every nook and depth, and through the solemn stillness frogs sent up their shrill refrain, he repeated to himself the story of her tragic death. Strongly as he sided with the Christians, yet he stood by her side as she kindled the great tower. Argant he hated with all his heart, and bitterly begrudged him the companionship of such an angel. And then, when Tancred discovers her through the night, when beneath its gloomy shade the conflict begins, and they furiously fight, it was never without tears that he could utter the words :

"Alas! Chlorinda's lease of life is run,
Her hour is come, the deed of death is done."

And bitter indeed was his weeping as the hapless lover plunges his sword into her breast, loosens the helmet from his fallen foe and drags her to the water for baptism. And when again in the enchanted forest Tancred's sword bruises the tree, blood flows from the hurt, and a voice pierces him to the heart, telling that here he has afresh opened Chlorinda's wound, and seems doomed by fate unwittingly to injure those whom he loves, our Wilhelm's little heart melted completely. The story so entirely mastered his imagination that all he had read of the poem darkly fashioned itself into a coherent whole in his spirit, and so carried him away that, without exactly knowing how, he seriously thought of reproducing it as a play. He wished to act both Tancred and Reinald himself, for whom he found two suits of armour quite ready, and made

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

by his own hand. The one of dark grey paper with scales would admirably clothe the sober Tancred, while the other, of silver and gold paper, was for the magnificent Reinald.

In the eagerness of his enterprise he told everything to his comrades, who were enraptured, but could not well understand when it came to the point that all this must be acted, and acted, too, by them. All these misgivings Wilhelm scattered with consummate ease. He fixed at once upon a couple of rooms in the house of a neighbour playmate, without considering that his old aunt would never permit their use. It was just the same with the theatre, of which he had no clear idea, except that it was to be set up on beams, that the wings should be in sections of movable screens, and that a large sheet should form the background. But whence all this was to come, of that he had never thought. For the forest they found a good substitute by making friends with a former servant in one of their homes, who had become high-forester, inducing him to bring them young beeches and fir trees. These he actually delivered ; and now they found themselves much embarrassed as to how they could produce their play before the trees withered. Good counsel was precious, for they lacked both place, theatre and curtains. The folding screens were all they possessed. In their perplexity they addressed themselves to a cousin, giving him a circumstantial description of the proposed splendours. Though he could not execute the whole plan, yet he managed to help them, brought together in a small room all the tables he could find in the house and neighbourhood, and on these erected his walls, providing also a back view of green curtains, of which the trees made a part. Lights were kindled, the maids and children had all assembled, it was time to begin, and the entire band of heroes was ready equipped, when for the first time it dawned upon them that no one knew what he had to say. In the fire of invention, and quite absorbed by the matter in hand, Wilhelm had forgotten that each one ought to know what and when he had to speak, and the others, in their

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

eagerness of execution, had also not given it a thought. They believed it would be easy to present themselves as heroes, easy to speak and act like the personages into whose world Wilhelm's gift had transported them.

They stood amazed, questioned with each other what should come first, and Wilhelm, who had always imagined himself as Tancred, stepping forward alone, began a few couplets out of the heroic poem. But as this too quickly changed to narrative, and in his own speech he sometimes figured in the third person, and Gottfried, whose turn it was, refused to come forward, he was obliged to retreat amid the loud laughter of all the spectators, a misfortune which grieved his soul more than many a subsequent sorrow. Their great scheme had miscarried. But the audience was there and wanted to see something. They were all fully dressed, so Wilhelm pulled himself together, and determined at once that they would act David and Goliath. Some of his company had already produced the puppet play with him, all had often seen it ; the parts were allotted, and each promised to do his best. A comical little youngster painted himself a black beard, so that, in case of any break occurring, he might fill it up with a few antics as clown. This did not suit Wilhelm at all, who found it contrary to the seriousness of the piece, but this time he had to yield. But he swore that, once escaped from the present fix, he would never venture upon another play until he had carefully thought it all out.

CHAPTER X

WILHELM had now reached those years in which the physical forces begin most to develop, and in which people are often unable to imagine why a smart and active child should appear outwardly stupid and impracticable. He now read a great deal, and still found his best satisfaction in comedies, and such romances as he read he could not help transforming in his mind into plays. He was filled with the idea that whatever delights in narrative must

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

be far better when presented to the eye. Even when at school he had to wade through an outline history of the world and its states, he carefully marked the places where anyone had been stabbed or poisoned in some unusual manner, because, according to his notion, these were first-rate qualifications for a fifth act. But in his compositions he could not easily provide for the four preceding acts, because he had never yet read them in any play. His comrades, who had now acquired a taste for acting, sometimes induced him to allot parts, and he, having a very lively power of imagination, and able to think himself into every part, thought he could present them all. He therefore generally chose those rôles which suited him least, and, if at all possible, a couple. It is a quality of childhood to be able to make all of all things, and not to be led astray by the most obvious *qui pro quos*. Thus our lads continued to play, and each fancied himself competent. At first they only produced pieces with male characters, of which truly there are not many, but for other plays disguised some of the party out of their resources, and finally called in their sisters to share the game. In some households this was regarded as a useful occupation, and friends were invited to form an audience. An old bachelor among their relatives, who claimed to be a connoisseur, meddled in the matter and taught them how to stand, declaim and move about, a course of instruction which did not please Wilhelm at all, who fancied he could do it better than his instructor. They soon fell to tragedy, having often heard, and believing it themselves, that it is easier to make and act a tragedy than a comedy. And with these they were better pleased than with the others, because in the latter whatever is dull, insipid or unnatural becomes quickly evident; whereas in tragedy they felt themselves noble persons, and did not care for disapproval of the pomposity, affectation and exaggeration of their action, having noticed in common life that many persons, of no consequence themselves, believed they could assume importance by putting on a stiff carriage and strange grimaces.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

Boys and girls could not long share this game without awakening the promptings of Nature, and the company soon began to split up into small love parties, thus often acting comedy in the midst of comedy. Behind the scenes the happy couples almost squeezed each other's fingers off, and literally dissolved in bliss when, having painted and decked each other out, they seemed more ideal and beautiful than ever. On the other hand, their unhappy rivals consumed with envy, and, out of childish jealousy and mischievousness, would often spoil or cause this or that scene to be spoiled. Wilhelm's capacity as director revealed itself on such occasions in all its splendour, for though in rehearsal he sought to smooth every such difference in kindness, and indulgently shut one eye to many things, so long as the players otherwise took pains and knew their parts by heart; yet on the day of actual performance he understood no jokes, and from the moment when he stood behind the curtain in half-boots, in royal mantle and diadem, nothing profane or silly might be done. Woe to such as crossed him in a Neronic mood! So dreadful his glance, so dignified the gesture of his arm, the tone of his voice, that the guilty party shrank back aghast, and for this time at least there was peace.

As the plays acted grew more numerous and important, and the company of actors more comprehensive, so much the more onerous became for Wilhelm the position of director, which he, as originator, occupied with general consent. When a play was proposed and chosen, there was great trouble until the parts were all assigned. Everyone put in a claim for the chief rôle, for the most attractive, or for that of the lover, so that Wilhelm, who was chiefly anxious that a play be acted, often held back and magnanimously took a lesser part, though he could never bring himself to accept the character of the confidential friend. When, however, one or other lost his temper during rehearsal, or out of sheer obstinacy threw up his part a day or two before the performance, Wilhelm had a chance of exercising all his patience, self-denial and power of persuasion. And he succeeded. His zeal,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

his assiduity, his love for the good cause, nourished by a reasonable self-love, and the fidelity by which he had attached the best among the company to himself, all these facilitated his task. And how should he fail of his object, when, directly it was mooted, he knew no other passion, could by nothing be turned aside, but advanced with the utmost directness and best possible courage to his goal, and with kindness and suavity lured all fellow wanderers to follow the same path?

It was particularly fortunate under these circumstances that Wilhelm's good natural qualities came to his help, and that none of the girls for whom he soon enough began to feel a fancy were able to join his theatrical company; his love for the theatre therefore remained pure, and he could behold without rivalry how the others each sought to set his own princess upon the throne. This impartiality increased the confidence of his followers, who were often appeased by his decision, to which in irreconcilable cases they appealed.

CHAPTER XI

THE age of boyhood is, I believe, less amiable than that of childhood, because it is a middle, a half state. Although childishness still clings to our boys, and they are still childish, yet with its earlier limitation they have lost the lovable complacency of that former state; their senses reach forward, they see the youth, the man before them, and because the way lies thither, imagination runs ahead, desires out-soar their surroundings, they imitate and act things they neither can nor should be. It is just so with the inner state of their bodies, just so with their outward growth. And thus it was also with our young friends' theatre. Though here and there they picked up something, yet the longer they played, and the more pains they took, their playing became ever more wearisome; the comicality of their first unconsciousness fell away,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

in which, without knowing it, they had often parodied their pieces magnificently, and was changed to a stiff, conceited mediocrity, all the more fatal because they could tell themselves, and frequently heard from their audience, that in many things they had improved. The greatest damage wrought among them was by a company of comedians which just then reached their town. It was a time of crisis for the German stage, which, having thrown away the shoes of childhood before they were worn out, was now obliged to run barefoot. Among these actors there was indeed much that was natural and good, which nevertheless choked under a weight of affectation, acquired grimaces and self-conceit; and as all that is false can be most easily imitated, because it strikes the eye most forcibly, our amateurs quickly robbed these cranes of their strange feathers to deck themselves withal. Gait, posture and tone were insensibly copied, and they all looked upon it as an honour when any of their audience was sharp enough to detect that they accurately resembled this or that member of the troupe.

CHAPTER XII

As his years advanced and the trouble in his household still continued, the elder Meister set his whole hope upon Wilhelm, whose brilliant abilities provided him now and then a cheerful moment. Yet he wished that the boy would turn them to better purpose, and devote himself betimes and altogether to a commercial calling. Yet in many respects he had cause to be well satisfied with his son. French and Italian he had quickly mastered, in Latin he could already decline his nouns, and conducted the correspondence with considerable facility, except that here and there, especially in foreign letters, a theatrical expression sometimes slipped in. With his English he took great pains, and no one could be better in the shop. In the first

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

place he never knew tedium, because in quiet hours he brought out his book or roll of paper from the drawer, and secondly, because by his affability and pleasant manners he attracted many, knew how to yield a point at the right time, and never grew impatient at the endless picking and choosing of the ladies, but rather helped them with good advice and faithfully sought to hinder them from fixing their choice on the worst article. Those girls who had seen him on the amateur stage, generally came soon after to see what he looked like by daylight, and mostly agreed that, although he did not look quite so nice as by lamp-light, rouged and at a distance, yet he pleased them all sufficiently well. For it is certain that the theatre tinges the actor with a peculiar lustre, which does not quite wear off in common life. Their imagination always sought the lovely image which floated still in memory, and if at first they went away dissatisfied, they came again so often—for which the variety of his business afforded occasion—that at last they fancied they found it all in him, and even preferred the fresh, bright youth to the rouged and spurious prince as seen from a distance.

But with all these good qualities, he lacked the genuine spirit of a commercial man. The love of figures, and especially the love of fractions, in which so much usually consists, forsook him, as did also the attention to small advantages and a due sense of the high value of money. With much sorrow the elder Meister often observed that his son would never become a calculator and perfect economist, although he could reckon pretty well and wasted nothing.

Wilhelm's spirit had long risen above these mean necessities, especially as nothing escaped him in his father's house, and he was far too vivacious and upright not to let his contempt for business occasionally peep through, even in his father's presence. He felt it as an oppressive weight upon his soul, as bird-lime which had limed the wings of his spirit, as cords which fettered that upward flight of the mind towards which he felt himself naturally developing. Such declarations sometimes produced strife

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

between father and son, at the end of which the elder was mostly angered and the younger agitated, while the matter was made no better by the fact that each party seemed only more confirmed in his opinion, and that Wilhelm, who truly loved his father, and did not like being sharply spoken to, retired more and more into himself. His sentiments, which grew steadily warmer and stronger, and his fancy, which soared ever higher, were steadfastly turned toward the theatre—and what wonder? Shut up in a town, imprisoned in bourgeois life, depressed at home, without any outlook upon Nature, without freedom of heart! As the common days of the week crawled along, so must he crawl with them. The absurd tedium of Sundays and feast days only made him the more restless, and whatever of the free world he might behold on a country walk never entered into his soul. He was merely paying Nature a visit, and she received him as a visitor. And with all his wealth of love, of friendship, of yearning after lofty deeds, whither should he carry them? How could the stage be for him other than a place of healing, in which, as in a nutshell, he could see the world, and gaze, as in a mirror, upon his own sensations and future deeds, upon the forms of heroes, his friends and brothers, and all the luring splendour of Nature, and could do this under a comfortable roof and by all weathers? In short, if we only realise how all unnatural native feeling concentrates, as by magic, upon this focus, no one can be surprised that, like so many other young men, he became chained to the theatre.

CHAPTER XIII

NUMEROUS vicissitudes came to scatter the company which had once unitedly animated our little theatre. Yet Wilhelm still remained as its root, from which it now and then sprouted upwards. It was not long before he again

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

gathered a number together: one or two plays were produced, until the usual theatrical squabbles once more drove them asunder. Wilhelm was the happiest of suitors and party-builders. Wheresoever he went his theatrical world followed him; whenever an evening's assembly grew dull, they begged him to recite a monologue. He did so, and the applause he received was mingled in each with the secret wish that he could do it equally well. When the stock of monologues was exhausted, someone had to join him and read the second part, which gave occasion to learn by heart scenes for two, in which way several were interested and the company was reconstituted.

The more Wilhelm's feelings grew in vividness, so much the more did most plays begin to discontent him. By this time he had read through the enormous lumber of the German and French theatres, and was ever advancing further from those years in which we swallow all that is printed, in which, though perhaps we do not easily delight in mediocrity, yet are willing for the sake of a few passages, or of a pathetic ending, to accept almost anything. He now began to seek out the most violent, the tenderest or most furious scenes, and, having heard speak of picturesque attitude, strove also to accompany his declamation with manifold gesture. And this did not sit ill upon him, for he was well built, possessed flexible limbs, and was gifted by Nature with a noble deportment. Yet it was inevitable that in these gestures the expression should seem somewhat forced, and give his listeners more anxiety and embarrassment than pleasure. And in this connection we must not forget that in his leisure hours he diligently practised the art of stabbing, of dropping dead and flinging himself down in despair. Indeed, he brought this so far that no tragedian could with stronger effect have easily presented the cumulative changes of two-and-thirty passions in one monologue.

CHAPTER XIV

DURING the ferment of these natural artistic strivings Fate decreed that love should bind our hero with yet firmer bonds to the theatre. Hitherto his little affairs had all been like so many preludes to a great musical composition, in which through manifold harmonies we pass from one tone to another, without any other purpose than to give greater sensibility to the ear for what is to follow, and imperceptibly conduct the listener to a portal which shall in a moment reveal to him all its glories. It is so with most men in the matter of love, and he whom Fate loves she thus leads to bliss and misery.

Wilhelm visited the theatrical performances which occasionally enlivened his town throughout the year as often as he could without arousing undue trouble at home, and had noticed among the players one girl who often pleased him, because there was an accent in her tone beyond the others, which oftentimes went to his heart, especially when she lamented or spoke something drolly good-tempered. She did not always please him, but if ever he felt her acting unendurable he cast the blame upon her rôle. Yet her delicate little face and full, round bosom spoke powerfully on her behalf, and he envied every servant who could freely approach her during the piece. The others were seldom right for him. The play seemed to be produced solely for her sake, and he compared all such to gods as were permitted to throw an arm about her, and, as brother or husband, press her in glad recognition to the heart. Nay, so far was he gone in love, that although generally seeing with the eye of an artist and a connoisseur, yet when she was halfway involved in a play, he became uplifted to a genuine child-like illusion, and sometimes started up as from a dream, if a wearisome act or a scene badly acted by the others gave him an ungentle shock.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

And thus matters continued for a while without his making her acquaintance. His bourgeois shyness held him back from approaching her when visiting the theatre, and each time he saw her she seemed to stir a fresh vein within him. True, he always made her a stiff bow whenever he happened to stand near her behind the scenes, or else bumped against something, or burned his coat in respectfully stepping out of her way. But now and then she looked at him with so significant a glance that he could not help believing she saw him, and the thought pleased him well, although she had not in the least noticed him: for both in the theatre and in the greater world one is often accustomed to cast earnest eyes upon objects of which one is taking no notice whatever; and with a woman especially, who knows from experience that her eyes influence, inflame and quicken, the habit of playing with people as a cat with a mouse becomes mechanical and is practised unconsciously.

CHAPTER XV

DURING this time Wilhelm made acquaintance with two actors at an inn where he was treating some strangers to wine. They found him so well informed about the theatre, and holding such correct views of the actor's art, that they fancied they had found in him the right man to whom to display with credit their own mastery of various rôles. They therefore soon invited him to visit their rooms, where they promised to declaim sundry pieces to him. With difficulty he concealed his joy as they added that Madame B. would also be of the company. I name her here as Madame, though I remember having formerly spoken of her as a girl. To avoid all misunderstanding, let me then at once disclose the fact that she had contracted a "marriage of conscience" with a man without conscience. He soon after quitted the company, and she was,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

except for this trifle, a girl as before. She again used her former name, and passed first as maiden, then as wife, and now as widow. Wilhelm was anxious to hold her for the last, and found certainly the strongest reasons on this side.

His embarrassment and agitation on beholding her did but render him the more agreeable and vivacious. He displayed great courtesy towards her, which of itself, without his otherwise attractive qualities, would have secured her notice. The company began first of all to discuss what was shortly to be played, spoke of new pieces, of the German theatre, of how it would soon be equal to the French, that it was a sin to produce only translations, that people of high station were beginning to interest themselves in the stage, of the status of the actor, and how this was daily becoming more honoured and honourable. In demonstration of this last point Wilhelm excelled them all. "It is an unheard-of prejudice," he exclaimed, "which causes men to despise a calling which they have so many reasons to honour. If the preacher who proclaims the Word of God is therefore, and rightly, the most highly venerated person in the State, surely the actor may be reckoned reverend, who speaks to our hearts with the voice of Nature, who, with alternate gladness, earnestness and anguish, ventures to attack the obdurate breast of man, rightly to attune its obscurely involved feelings and draw forth the divine harmony of brotherhood and mutual love. Where can we find a refuge against ennui like that of the theatre, where can society more agreeably assemble, where must men more readily confess that they are brothers than when, hanging on the form or on the mouth of a single individual, they are all borne aloft as upon the wings of a single emotion? What are pictures and statues compared to the living flesh of my flesh, that other ego, which suffers, is glad and directly agitates my every accordant nerve? And where should we look for most virtue—in the oppressed burgher, who rakes up his living in anxious and sordid trade, or in him whose art, which brings him bread, is yet penetrated with the noblest and greatest human emotions, who daily studies and presents

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

virtue and vice in all their nakedness, and, before he can cause others to perceive them so intensely, must himself most vividly feel their beauty and ugliness? I can well believe that in many this dignity is besmirched by a vagabond life, by want and worry, yet, even on this account, how cruel it is by narrow-minded pride to thrust back such as strive after better things." He continued eagerly in this strain, so that all stood amazed, and though they noted much in his apologia which did not seem quite to harmonise, yet they were highly satisfied, and finally assured him that it was very true—they were unjustly treated. Hereby Madame B. also added a word now and then, but soon managed to change the discourse to the admirable manner in which he had uttered it all, and paid him the compliment of hinting that he must surely already have acted. Although this came upon him somewhat unexpectedly, because he did not think that he had here either acted or declaimed, but spoken right out as he felt in his heart, yet he took up the word at once, regarding it as the transition to another discourse, and assured them all frankly that he had ever cherished a great love for the theatre, but could unhappily never feel satisfied with himself. The others protested that for an amateur it was already a great deal if he could act one or two characters reasonably well, but to be an all-round actor, as they call it, requires intense study, such as is alone possible for a professional actor. This did not altogether suit Wilhelm. He imagined himself already to possess what they called art; but he let it pass. Each one now offered to declaim a monologue before Wilhelm. One, who in tragic passion knew neither father nor brother, and spared not the child in its mother's womb, pushed forward and wrought himself into a sweat, and his listeners into a fright, with the famous soliloquy and ghost-scene from "Richard the Third." The others, who waited for him to be done, followed on, some with comic, some with tender passages, and each did his best to gain the notice of the young critic. He was as attentive as possible, considering the double hindrance of his beloved's

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

proximity and of the monologue which he was also turning over in his own mind for later recitation. First, he praised them in general, and then commended certain special passages, respecting which they asked if he had well noted this or that expression. This was neither deceit nor short-sightedness on his part, but arose solely from his desire to find much good ; so that in fact he really did find much that was good, and though suspecting at the same time that all was not quite correct, yet from sheer good temper he let it slip through, blamed himself, his humour, or else thought no more about it. Madame B. and Wilhelm could not now agree as to which should give the first recitation. At last they discovered in the course of conversation that he had played the character of Mellefont and she that of Sara, while one of those present knew the part of Norton almost by heart ; so that they soon agreed to rehearse together. Wilhelm clothed himself as much as possible in forbidding gloom ; Sara sailed along in tender laments, spoke the dreadful dream with genuine terror, and understood to do it so well that in the flattering passages it was hard to tell whether she were fawning on the hero of the piece or on the actor. Wilhelm was thereby so enraptured with her acting that he held her for the first actress in Germany. The visit over, they exchanged praise and satisfaction. And certainly Wilhelm had declaimed certain passages, for which his feeling sufficed, with excellent effect, and the admiration of his audience would have been mingled with envy had they not been able to tell themselves that in all those points in which he had ventured an encroachment upon their art he lingered far behind them. They remained a short time longer together. Wilhelm accompanied Madame home, but was unfortunately obliged to decline her invitation to mount the stairs with her, lest he might fail in punctuality at the family evening meal. But he reserved this permission for the future ; and all night long and next day her image floated so often before him that he was very absent and clumsy at business. Next evening, as soon as he had closed the shop, an invisible hand

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

seized him by the forelock, he felt that he was being led away, and found himself sitting, as in a dream, on the sofa beside his adored one.

CHAPTER XVI

A GIRL who wins herself a fresh lover in succession to several previous conquests is like the flame when a new log of wood is laid upon the burnt-out embers. Actively she flatters the newly arrived darling, plays with lambent heat around him until he glows in full blaze of splendour. Her avidity seems to pass over him in play, but with every flash she pierces deeper and deeper, consuming his marrow to its very depths. Ere long, like his forsaken rivals, he will lie upon the ground and, inwardly glowing, extinguish in smoky agony.

At first Madame B. did not know exactly what to make of Wilhelm. The early period of their acquaintance passed in fairly active talk, until this died away, and he sank into that blissful silence in which, in presence of the beloved object, we extract unspeakable rapture even from dullness itself. In the beginning his goodness, devotion, restraint, innocence, contentedness, adoration and sincerity embarrassed her. In her early years she had beheld the childish joys of love too quickly scared away, was conscious of so many humiliations endured in the arms of one and another, and at the present time was sacrificed to the secret pleasures of a wealthy and unbearably dull milksop, and, being naturally a good-hearted creature, never felt quite comfortable when Wilhelm seized and kissed her hand in all sincerity, gazing into her eyes with the full, clear glance of youthful love. She could not endure that glance; she feared lest he might read experience in her own; her eyes sank in confusion, and the happy Wilhelm believed that he found therein an augury and sweet confession of love, so that his senses clashed against each other like the strings of a psaltery. O happy youth! O happy time of love's awakening

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

fires ! For man is then just like a child, which delights for hours together in an echo, bears all alone the charges of conversation, and is well content with the entertainment when his invisible opposite does but re-echo his own words. Mariana helped herself out for a while in this way. She had loved, was capable of love, and in presence of Wilhelm felt, as before a strange being, a sentiment akin to reverence. Half by nature, half by dramatic instinct, she contrived to transport herself into his sensations, her merry disposition assisting, so that ere long she learned to know him. She felt herself better when he was there. Her youth had not left behind it the memory of many purely happy hours, and the whole-hearted love wherewith Wilhelm surrounded her, the high value which his simple soul set upon her worth, quickly extinguished, especially in his presence, every adverse sense of her own unworthiness. Her other lover was absent, and she thrust aside from memory her relation to him, just as we scare away the recollection of a fault from the realm of living remembrance to that of historical knowledge.

He saw her only as often as he could, which for a lover was far too seldom. His evening hours were sometimes free : he neglected his friends and stole an interval now and then. But she was mostly busy at the theatre, and, without incurring the risk of sour faces from father and mother, he could not stop out later than eight o'clock, or half-past, by which time the play was generally over. But she managed to arrange things—either by appointment when her name was not on the bills, or she let him take her home during the ballet, when he could dawdle until the rattling of the coach obliged him to part from his happiness.

He could now scarcely endure to behold her from the pit ; the sight seemed to seize him by the throat. He gained admission to the stage, behind the scenes. Though the perspective charm was gone, yet the magic of love remained. For hours he could stand by the greasy foot-lights, enduring the reek of unsnuffed candles, for the sake of watching her. One flash of her eyes set him a-trembling

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

and transformed the wilderness of beams and laths into a paradise. The stuffed lambs, muslin waterfalls, paste-board rose-trees and one-sided straw huts awakened in him the loveliest images which he had ever read of in pastoral poetry. Nay, even the scraggy, long-nosed, broad-breasted dancers were not always repugnant, for did they not stand upon the same boards as his incomparable one ? Thus how true it is that love, which must animate even rose and myrtle bowers and moonlight, can also give life to shavings and paper cuttings ! So potent is her spice that it can lend flavour to the stalest and most nauseous decoctions. And truly it needed such a spice to render decently endurable or permanently pleasant the condition in which he usually found her disordered room, and sometimes even herself. Brought up in a genteel burgher household, order and cleanliness were the element in which he breathed, and his exalted fancy had always lavishly decorated his own room, which he regarded as a little kingdom. His bed-curtains were looped up in great folds with tassels, like the awning of a throne ; at some expense he had procured a carpet for the middle of the room and a fine one for the table. Almost mechanically he so laid or placed his books and other effects that they should be prettily grouped ; his cap he had shaped like a turban, and the wide sleeves of his dressing-gown were cut short in Turkish fashion, for which he alleged as excuse that they hindered him in writing. And when quite alone at evening and fearing no interruption, he wore a silk scarf about his body. Some even say that he occasionally stuck a dagger in his girdle, appropriated from an old armoury, with which weapon he marched up and down the room ; yea, it is said he never prayed except kneeling upon his carpet. This fastidious side of his character and conduct detracted but little from his good natural qualities. In fact, those who carefully observe will have seen this strain in many children and young people. Nay, more, has it not ever been the case that we can scarcely imagine majesty otherwise than in a long train and gorgeous mantle ; that lofty rank and nobility of deed are

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

only made visible and capable of imitation in chubby-cheeked representation; and that we cannot make men realise that greatness and nobility are but the purest and truest forms of the natural, and that for this reason they can be neither presented nor copied?

How lucky did Wilhelm in his heart consider those actors whom he saw possessed of so many magnificent garments, constantly practising a dignified carriage, whose souls were a mirror of all that the world had produced most glorious and splendid in sentiment and passion. He pictured their private life as a series of worthy actions and employments, whereof their appearance upon the stage was but the utmost pinnacle, just as silver, long stirred in the purifying crucible, issues at last in rainbow-hued lustre a dazzling mass before the workman's eyes.

At first, therefore, he was startled on visiting his beloved, when, through the mist of happiness which enwrapped her, he gazed upon tables, chairs and floor. Lying there, scattered in hasty confusion, he beheld the ruins of a momentary, light and spurious adornment, like the glittering scales stripped from some fish. The tools of human cleanliness—combs, soap, towels, pomade—were likewise not concealed, nor were the traces of their vocation. Books and shoes, dirty linen and Italian flowers, etuis, hairpins, rouge-pots and ribands, music and straw hats—none scorned the neighbourhood of the other, all were united in one common element of powder and dust. But as Wilhelm for the most part did not know where he was when he saw her; as all this was hers, had touched her, it became dear to his heart, till at last he found a charm in this disordered and confused household such as he never experienced amid his own stately magnificence. Here, when he removed her bodice to reach the piano, or laid her gown upon the bed that he might sit down, or when she herself with unembarrassed freedom openly performed much that is usually hidden from strangers, it seemed to him, I say, as though he were brought nearer to her, as though the fellowship between them were being cemented by invisible bonds.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

But the deportment of the other actors, whom he sometimes met in her rooms, or learned to know through her, was not so easily digested. Busily idle, they generally made a great pother about the veriest trifles ; what clothes they should wear, from which side they ought to enter, how long the play would last, complaints of the director's injustice, that he undervalued their talents, that So-and-so didn't know his part yesterday, or that such and such a piece was not playable, that the German stage was daily growing better, and the actor being ever more respected. Such was their theatrical discourse. In ordinary life their talk turned more upon the coffee-houses and wine-gardens, cards, some comrade in prison for debt, how much some actor received monthly in another company, or a quarrel between a pair of sharp-tongued women, over which the company fell into two parties. They always ended up with the public and its attention to and satisfaction with themselves, the great and important influence exerted by the theatre upon the culture of a nation and of the world.

Wilhelm was puzzled how to reconcile all this, and remained unable to form any clear conception of these contradictions, seeing that his love left him little leisure for deeper meditation.

CHAPTER XVII

It rarely happens that two young and equally innocent souls start out hand in hand on the path of love, and, harmlessly roaming, lost in tortuous ways, find themselves unsuspectingly conducted to places from which they deemed themselves far distant. For just as nature has nearly everywhere subjected inexperience to experience, so, too, is it here. One party will always play the rôle of friend, who, knowing the district, would initiate the new arrival into its beauties. Silently and unperceived he guides him hither or thither, lets him revel in this or that prospect without betraying what great things lie ahead,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

allows him toilsomely to climb up and down where there was no need to do so, in order to exhibit some pleasant view from its most effective side; while the other, whether noticing his guile or not, thanks his conductor for such kindly pains.

Though so modest and whole-hearted in his faith in Mariana's virtue, yet Wilhelm's endearments insensibly and daily grew more ardent, and she, without granting him all that he demanded, only held him back for a time at each stage, where, moreover, his love and awe bade him rest awhile. Her embarrassment, the feeble resistance she opposed to his kisses, the fits of musing into which she often fell, all these raised him to such a rapture of passion that he clung to her with every fibre of his being. In his arms Mariana first learned to know that bliss of love to which she had hitherto been a stranger; the heartiness wherewith he pressed her to his bosom, the thankfulness which often contented itself with her hand, penetrated her, and she daily recovered spirit. She now began earnestly to long for release from that other connection mentioned above, the thought of which grew daily more repugnant. But how to break loose? We all know how hard it is to take a decisive step, and that thousands will rather let their life drag painfully on in wearisome misery through each new day. And now behold a girl, and in such circumstances! She had made casual enquiry about Wilhelm's fortune, his position, and clearly perceived that in him she could hope to find no compensation for that which she wished to sacrifice to his love. He had already lavished upon Mariana the entire interest on a capital sum assigned by his grandmother to her grandchildren during their parents' lifetime. She puzzled over the matter for a while, and seeing no solution, resigned herself once more to chance, to life and love. But the lightness, animation and wit with which in the early stages of their passion they had sought to bind and entertain each other, and whose exercise gave zest to each caress, tended daily more and more to decay. At first they often jested in little scenes from this or that play, mocked each other with pleasant

raillery from some poet ; and when the offended one at last fell upon her neck and chastised her with a kiss, thus falsifying the past with so happy a catastrophe, these were their times of highest love. But now, when they experimented in such joys, the effect upon Wilhelm's head was as though he were drunk with beer ; he became stupid and uncomfortable in his sinews, so that he took refuge in all kinds of little jealousies and banter, for which let us forgive him ; for he was worse off than one who chases a shadow ; he held in his arms and touched with his lips that which he might not enjoy, on which he might not satiate himself. Mariana, who was not ignorant of his torment, would in many moments have shared with him the bliss which he craved. She felt in her heart that he deserved far more than she could give him, but his distraction and his love obscured his merits, and her stillness, her disquiet, her tears, her fugitive embraces—the sweetest tones of yielding love—brought him to her feet in a frenzy of agony and beside himself, until at last, in dawning moments of tumult, they both lost themselves in those joys of love which fate has reserved for the sons of men, in order to compensate in some measure for their many wrongs and griefs, deprivations and sorrows, delays, dreams, hopes and longings.

CHAPTER XVIII

WILHELM, whose happiness was now complete, resigned himself entirely to the ravishments of love. If at first he had been bound to Mariana by desire and hope, he was the more so now by blisssfullest satisfaction, from which he seemed to drink ever fresh thirst. During his briefest absence the memory of Mariana gripped him more strongly than ever. If once she had been a necessity, she now became indispensable, for he was linked to her by every bond of humanity. In the integrity of his soul he felt she had become the half, more than the half, of his being. His

gratitude and devotion were beyond all bounds. Even Mariana was able to deceive herself for a time, and shared with him the sense of intense happiness. Alas ! if only the cold hand of reproach had not sometimes gripped her by the heart ! Even on Wilhelm's breast she was never safe from it, even beneath the wings of his love. But when alone, when from the clouds amid which his passion bore her aloft she fell to recognition of her situation, then indeed was she to be pitied. For as long as she lived in abject perplexity, deceiving herself as to her position, or rather not recognising it, frivolity came to her aid ; and the incidents to which she stood exposed appeared but singly. Pleasure and pain cancelled each other, her humiliation was compensated by vanity, her privation often by momentary superfluity. She could adduce need and custom as her law and justification, and thus, from hour to hour, from day to day, could shake off all unpleasant feelings. But now that the poor girl had felt herself uplifted for brief moments into a better world, had looked down, as from the skies, through light and joy upon the waste and refuse of her life, had realised what a wretched creature that woman is who cannot, with desire, also inspire love and respect, she found herself, both outwardly and inwardly, always back at the same spot. She had nothing now that could uplift her ; wheresoever she looked or sought, all seemed empty to her thought, and her heart found no support.

With Wilhelm it was quite otherwise. For him a new world had arisen, a world rich in blissful prospects. If the excess of his first joys somewhat abated, yet the fact which formerly had but darkly burrowed in his soul now stood out clear as light : She is thine ! She has given herself to thee ! She, the beloved, the courted, the adored creature, has yielded herself in truth and faith to thee—and to no ingrate has she done it ! Everywhere, as he stood or walked, he thus spoke within himself, with ever overflowing heart, and torrents of glowing words gave utterance to the loftiest sentiments, believing that in all this he beheld a clear guidance of fate, which, through

Mariana, was holding out a hand to pluck him from that stagnating and torpid bourgeois life whence he so long had yearned to escape. The discord between his parents lay heavy upon his heart. To be the daily witness of such evils imposes a strain upon the heart, which either eats itself away or is hardened, and in both cases goes to ruin. Added to this was the fact that one of his friends, a very steady man, had proposed for the hand of his eldest sister, and would be able to second his father in business, and consequently take his own place there.

The thought of quitting his father's house and his relatives appeared easy of fulfilment, and did not weigh with him at all. He was young and new in the world, and his courage to run through its amplitudes in quest of bliss and contentment had been heightened by love. Henceforth he saw a clear vocation to the theatre, and now that he strove thither on Mariana's hand, the lofty goal he had set before him seemed nearer. Nor could it be otherwise than that in happy moments he should behold in fancy the budding perfect actor, the creator of a great national theatre, for which he had heard so many sigh, and never without a certain complaisant reflection upon himself. All that had hitherto slumbered in the innermost corners of his soul now became alive, and out of its multitudinous ideas wrought, with tints of love, a picture on a background of mist. Here, it is true, the forms ran much into each other, but the effect of the whole was only the more enchanting.

Meanwhile, our couple lived on for a considerable time with altogether different impulses in their hearts. As no hour spent together ever seemed long, they scarcely noted how the days flew by, and permitted one after the other to pass away without forming any resolution, such as might clear up or decide their future fortunes.

CHAPTER XIX

WILHELM's friend and presumptive brother-in-law was one of those tested men of decided character who are usually termed cold, because under provocation they do not blaze up quickly or visibly. His intercourse with Wilhelm also was one perpetual feud, through which their affection grew ever firmer. Each found profit in the other. Werner pleased himself with the thought that he sometimes managed to bring those excellent but occasionally unrestrained gifts of the other under bit and bridle; while Wilhelm often triumphed gloriously when he swept his more deliberate friend away upon the stream of his own intenser emotion. Thus each sharpened the other, and they were accustomed to meet daily, and this precisely because neither had anything in common with the other, because they could not understand each other, nor even make themselves understood. But as they were both good fellows, they agreed in the main, aiming at a common goal, yet neither was ever able to comprehend why he could not convert the other to his own opinion.

Werner observed that Wilhelm's visits became rarer, that in conversation he broke off abruptly and impatiently in the middle of his favourite topics, that he no longer became absorbed in the vivid development of singular ideas—always a sure sign of an unembarrassed and self-sufficing heart, which can find solace in the companionship of a friend. Werner, who was a very precise man, sought the cause at first in his own behaviour, until some coffee-house gossip brought him on the true scent, and to this certain exuberant imprudences of Wilhelm soon lent assurance. He made a few enquiries and quickly discovered to his horror that Wilhelm had attached himself to an actress, to a woman who seduced him that she might extract money from him, and who, moreover, still allowed herself to be maintained by the most worthless of rivals. He took every care to become accurately informed, and being at last fully convinced, opened one evening his

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

attack on Wilhelm. He minutely told the whole story, at first calmly, then with the most urgent seriousness of well-intentioned truth, leaving no point uncertain, and letting his friend taste all that bitterness with which calm men are often so generous to lovers. But he, too, fell from the clouds when Wilhelm replied, with some emotion, it is true, but with great composure : “ You don’t know the girl ! Appearances, I know, are against her, but I am as certain of her faithfulness and virtue as of my own love ! ”

Werner remained firm, appealed to evidence and witnesses. Wilhelm rejected them all, and soon departed in sullen agitation, like one whose decayed but firmly-rooted tooth a clumsy dentist has seized and vainly tugged. With comforting indignation Wilhelm flung every suspicion from his imagination. True, the lovely, unbroken image of Mariana, as it floated before his soul, had for a few moments been displaced by Werner’s words ; but ere long he had completely cleansed and re-erected it, and when he saw her again that evening it began afresh to shine and glitter as of yore.

Werner pondered now day and night how best to bring his friend to reason by persuasion and argument. He made several attempts, but they were gently yet entirely evaded. He grew quite low-spirited about the matter, and could not understand why the soundest opinions, presented with genuine sincerity, should not be strong enough to impress Wilhelm’s good and excellent heart.

The elder Meister was just at this time laid aside by illness. Wilhelm’s work took up his days, and care for his father the evenings, so that only the night remained for his sweetheart. She was quite agreeable to this, and a door leading from a woodshed into a narrow lane was found very convenient for slipping out of the house by night.

The strange influences of night, the deserted streets, which he was accustomed to see full of traffic, the glimmering night-lights in his acquaintances’ windows, and the sense of secrecy all added flavour to the adventure, and he crept almost every night to his beloved, wrapped in a mantle, and his bosom charged with Lindors and Leanders.

CHAPTER XX

MARIANA, whose love for him grew ever warmer, was meanwhile in a miserable condition. The bounty of her wealthy lover had not been interrupted by his absence, and he now announced his arrival for the following night by the gift of a piece of muslin for a nightgown.

She had often been in perplexity, and could usually gaze into the fate of the following day as into a troubled eternity. But this time she was oppressed from too many sides. Two lovers at once, which under other circumstances might well be tolerable, were here a more difficult matter. In the openness of his heart Wilhelm had minutely detailed the suspicions charged against her, so that she knew he was at least on his guard. The other man was insolent and ill-bred in his demeanour, and she was in a position in which she did not wish to fall out with either, so as to be sure at least of one. Wilhelm's tenderness had triumphed over her prudence, and she began to feel that the undesired felicity of becoming a mother lay before her. This fact she revealed to an old theatrical tailoress, who was an approved confidante in such cases, and who, after sundry cruel suggestions, whereat Mariana shuddered, advised, since it must be, that she should lay the blame upon the richer rather than upon the poorer lover, and especially not to let Wilhelm notice anything. As for the rest, she was to trust entirely in her for skilful handling of the emergency. It was this old woman who had restrained Mariana from a formal union with Wilhelm, regarding him as an immature fish, which a prudent angler throws back into the water. "What could you do with him?" she often asked. "His parents would never consent to his marrying you, and to elope with him would be an unpardonable folly. He has nothing, and why should you hang a man about your neck, and one too, who is in love with you? Besides, our manager is a man who stands no nonsense, and whenever a love-affair becomes a scandal is at once jealous for the 'renommée' of his troupe,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

as he calls it, and rather than anybody should say that one of his actresses has debauched a bonny burgher's son, he would chase her away the day it became public. And what would you do afterwards? A roving actor is a more miserable object even than a wandering apprentice. If you can keep him faithful, it would be better to come back again after a year. Perhaps his father will be dead by then, and an old love can always be renewed with advantage." The theatre tailoress was a child of this world. Up to a certain point she was right, and up to a certain point she carried Mariana with her, for the latter had still no idea how to break off with Wilhelm. Nevertheless prudence has such an air of authority that we often follow it against our inclination. Wilhelm meanwhile could not understand Mariana's manner at all. Though he quite looked upon her as his wife, had no other name for her than "dear little wife," and often attempted to lead her by his caresses to some positive declaration and determination of their connection, yet he felt that she always evaded the question of marriage, on which girls are so easily compliant. And yet he was full of delicacy, and expected again quite other delicacy from her; made up his mind to declare himself, and then went away from her side just as he came; puzzled his brains and argued with himself for another day; stood ever ready for the leap, and yet never left the spot. But amid all this bewilderment his ideas grew more and more confirmed, his vague prospects, his confused hopes developed into plans. During his father's illness he had imperceptibly hastened the wedding of his elder sister to Werner. All was so far in order, and only the necessary formalities delayed the event for a time. In fancy he had already restored his convalescent father to health, substituted his brother-in-law in his own place in the business and conduct of the family, and seemed, now and then, by way of experiment, to draw his feet from their tightly-locked fetters, just as a skilful thief or magician in prison sometimes does, in order to convince himself that deliverance is possible, and nearer than shortsighted men imagine. When now, in some leisure hour,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

he roamed by night over a wide square, shaking off every weight and stretching his hands towards Heaven, he felt as though everything lay behind and beneath him, and himself were freed from all. As through the stealthy night he crept to his love's endearments, or imagined her embracing him on the theatre's dazzling stage, thus combining nature and art, admired and envied by all, then indeed the long tramp through the town to her house seemed but a moment, unbroken save by the night-watchman's infrequent cry. And when again Mariana received him with nature and art, mastering her secret griefs, and stammering her delight; when in his arms she unsuspectingly dedicated the white nightgown, in which she looked quite English, what else could he do than, satiated with present pleasure, sweep her along with him into the glad future? But now she never appeared to partake his feelings, and in reply to his tender question as to whether he might consider himself a father, was constrained and embarrassed! Yet he painted it all over again in glorious colours, and during the whole of this period devoted the superfluity of his feelings and good nature to putting things straight and filling up breaches, but, somehow, never felt quite at ease in his mind concerning it all.

CHAPTER XXI

THE manager of our company of actors had already on many occasions threatened to leave the town; for although it was not small, and possessed many well-to-do citizens, yet, except at fair-times, he could not make his undertaking pay. To many folks the drama of Knave, Queen, King and Ace was more interesting, while other theatre-friends looked twice at their half-florins or contented themselves with free tickets. Subscribing was not at all in their way, so that art had to look after bread and butter, as is the custom of the world, for we cannot reasonably expect to have our fun for nothing. This

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

threat had often been but a false alarm, which, however, persuaded the public to come again, and caused Wilhelm to make more urgent preparations.

Werner now actually took part in the conduct of the family business, and Wilhelm, who had never yet roamed beyond his native town, managed to convince him that a journey to certain neighbouring places, already visited by Werner, would also be of advantage to his inexperience. They arranged a specified sum, which Werner was to procure, repaying himself by degrees. Although Wilhelm considered himself quite justified in this little deception, and felt persuaded that in the future his parents and relations would bless him for it, yet the thought of the first moment in which they would discover the truth was a stone against which his imagination sometimes wounded itself.

At last it seemed as though the company would seriously prolong its stay no further. Norman, Wilhelm's rival, hastened his journey to enjoy Mariana's love for a few days, and Wilhelm finally and definitely plucked up courage to possess her for ever, and thus attach himself to the theatre by indissoluble bonds.

Werner, whom he now urged more strongly to procure him means for the proposed journey, suspected no evil, for prudence never anticipates the extraordinary. Indeed, he thought it happened very apropos that, so soon after the object of his love, Wilhelm also should leave a place which would often recall an improper attachment to his memory.

Wilhelm had of late become more secret in his movements. This led the other to infer improvement, restrained him from other measures and inspired him with all the willingness Wilhelm could desire.

On the other hand, it was a welcome relief to Mariana when Wilhelm begged permission not to see her for a few days. She thereby gained breathing space in which to welcome her impetuous Norman with some degree of composure; for her heart did not go out towards the man. Wilhelm meanwhile sat alone at home, rummaged

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

among his papers, and mustered his possessions to see what would be useful in his wanderings through the world. Whatever, according to his previous opinion, savoured of books and the like was laid on one side. Only works of fancy, of poets and critics, were placed as familiar friends among the chosen ones, and having hitherto profited very little from the latter, he felt his appetite renewed when, on turning them over, he found with a blush of shame that their leaves had never been cut. He had procured them in full conviction of their necessity, yet had never been able to settle down to their study. A part of this time he also consecrated to writing a long letter to Mariana. He required pen and paper to tell her everything roundly and fully, just as he felt it in his heart; for although on the stage he could briskly declaim a passage learned by heart, and in common life could also perorate copiously of opinions and caprices, yet when he wanted to express his feelings with vigour the words often stuck in his throat. He could never find enough big words to convey what he felt, and when he made too many words, then he found that, somehow, they did not harmonise with what was in his heart. Writing helped him over this difficulty, for just as we are accustomed to clothe an absent love with a lovelier form, so do we find nothing incongruous in a heightened expression of our feelings, such as actual presence, so inimical to all romance, might often disallow. The following is the letter he wrote to Mariana :—

CHAPTER XXII

“ HERE I sit, thinking and writing to you, beneath the delicious mantle of night, which so often sheltered me in your arms, and all I think and do is for you alone, O, Mariana! to me, the happiest of men, it is as with a bridegroom, who, full of anticipation of the new world which shall unfold in and through him, stands thoughtful, longingly, upon the sacred threshold, before the mysterious curtains whence the ravishments of love whisper

him their greeting. I have so far conquered myself as not to see you for several days ; and, in prospect of such a compensation, have found it easy. Oh ! to be with you for ever ! altogether yours ! Dearest, you know not what I would, and yet you might have known it. How often have I not searched your heart with tender tones of loyalty, which, though longing to convey all, yet dared say nothing, to learn if perchance it shared my yearning after an eternal union. You have surely understood me, for the same desire must have trembled in your own heart. You have read my meaning in every kiss, in every moment of nestling repose ; and now your evasions, your modesty—oh, how I love you, my sweetest ! What another would seek to provoke by artifice, that resolve which girls mostly try to ripen by excess of sunshine—from this you withdraw, shutting up the half-opened breast of your lover by seeming tranquillity. But I can read you ! What a wretch I should be did I not recognise by this the pure, unselfish love, which thinks first of my welfare ! Be at ease ! We belong to each other, and neither can forsake or lose anything so long as we live for each other. Take this hand, solemnly accept this else superfluous pledge. We have tasted all the joys of love ; yet there are fresh delights in the settled thought of permanence. Ask not how ? Have no fear ! Fate provides for love, and all the more certainly because it is frugal. My heart has long since forsaken my parents' house. Even as my spirit hovers over the stage, so truly is my heart with you. O, my beloved ! was ever man granted so to combine his wishes as I ? The hopes which drive sleep from my eyelids and fetter me to this paper, which rise and sink within me like an everlasting dawn—your love and my happiness, I can scarce restrain myself from leaping up to run to you ; yet do I compel my heart that I may walk more securely and not, like a silly wanton, rush into heedless folly. I am acquainted with the manager S., and my journey shall be direct to him. A year ago he often wished that his folks had somewhat of my eagerness and joy in the theatre, and will be sure to welcome me. As for your company,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

it is no good ; and S. is so far from here that I can at first conceal my action. I shall at once find a small competence, which will support me for a time. I shall look about me, learn to know the public, then come and fetch you, and—Mariana ! you see how I enforce myself, that I may win you the more securely ; for not to see you during so long a period, to know you are alone in the wide world—oh ! I dare not picture it to myself ! And then to recall your love, which shields me against everything ! I pray, I beg you, do not deny me this one request. Ere we part give me your hand before the priest, and then I will quietly depart. It is but a form between us two, but, oh ! so fair a form ! The blessing of Heaven upon the bliss of earth ! It can be easily and secretly performed close at hand, in the Prince's chapel. I have money enough for both to begin with. We will share it, and before all is spent, Heaven will come to our aid. Yes, dearest, I have no fear. So glad a beginning must have a happy ending. I have never doubted that a man may make his way in the world, if only he be in earnest ; and I feel my courage equal to winning sustenance for two, yes, and for more. They say the world is ungrateful. I have not yet found it ungrateful to such as know rightly how to do something for it. My whole soul glows at the thought of standing up at last, to speak right to the hearts of men that which they so long have yearned to hear. Convinced as I am of the glory of the theatre, my soul has thousands of times winced to hear the most miserable of men fancy they could speak some great and potent word to our inmost heart. It is worse than music wrung from a pipe. The coarse incompetence of these fellows is an offence and a profanity. Often has the theatre contended with the pulpit, and neither has aught to charge against the other. It were devoutly to be wished that none but the noblest men stood in both places, and that God and Nature were alike glorified. These are no dreams, my darling. As on your heart I have been able to feel that you love, that you are for me, so do I seize the splendid thought and say—no, I will not speak it out, but I hope

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

that upon us two that great beauty, that vision of the superhuman so ardently desired by all, may descend in human form. So sure am I of this, as that upon your bosom joys were granted me, which men have ever termed celestial, because in such moments they are lifted above themselves.

"I cannot finish. I have already said so much, and know not if I have already told you all, all which concerns you; but as for the tumult raging in my heart, for this I can find no words.

"Take this sheet meanwhile, my love. I have read it through again, and find that I ought to begin it over afresh. Yet it contains all that you need know, enough to prepare you for the time when I shall speedily return to your bosom in all the rapture of sweet love. I seem to myself like a prisoner secretly filing his chains in a dungeon. To my unconscious, sleeping parents I cry 'Good night'!—and soon a longer good night. Fare you well! At last I end. Already my eyes have twice or thrice closed their lids, and the night is far spent."

CHAPTER XXIII

As springtime was already drawing on, the day seemed as though it would never end, and Wilhelm, his letter folded in his pocket, longed to visit Mariana. At last he crept away to her house, and, after so long an absence, could hardly control himself in her arms. But her heart was as though hewn in pieces, divided against itself by each of his caresses. His plan had been merely to announce a visit for the night and, in going away, to press the letter into her hand, that upon his return in the dead of night he might revel in her ecstasy, in her overwhelming joy. But before he was aware, he turned faint in the coveted presence of his beloved. She was sick, and could not say where; uneasy she was certainly, and could not agree to his suggested return at night. Having learned by

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

long intercourse to honour such pertinent hints, he quietly acquiesced, and feeling, moreover, that his letter would not now be quite seasonable, still retained it, especially as several of her movements seemed almost to compel departure. In the tumult of his chastening love he snatched a neckcloth from the dresser, thrust it into his pocket, and unwillingly quitted both her lips and her door. He crept home, but being unable to settle, changed his clothes and betook himself once more to the open air.

Passing through the streets, he heard agreeable night music, clarionettes, horns and bassoons, and his heart swelled within him. It was a party of travelling musicians of whom he had heard speak. He approached, and for a piece of money dragged them off to Mariana's dwelling. There were trees near by, which had long adorned the place, and beneath these he placed his singers, while he rested a little further off, surrendering his bosom entirely to the soothing tones which floated around him through the refreshing night. Stretched beneath the kindly stars, existence seemed like a golden dream. "She is listening to these flutes," he spake to his heart. "She feels whose forethought, whose love, thus fills the night with melody. Even in the distance we are united by these harmonies, just as by the finest vibrations of love, no matter how remote. Ah! two loving hearts are like a pair of magnetic clocks; whatever stirs in one must also move the other, for that which moves us both is but one, a single force, which runs through both. Could any man in her arms feel it possible to leave her? And yet I shall be far away shall seek an asylum for our love, and have her ever with me. How often, when absent, yet lost in thought of her, have I not touched a book, a garment, or other object, and fancied I touched her hand, so completely was I enveloped in the sense of her presence. And, oh! to recall those moments, which flee the light of day as the eye of a cold spectator, to enjoy which the gods forsake their painless state of unemotional contentment! Ah! to recall them! as though remembrance could equal the ecstasy of that cup

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

of delirious rapture, which bound our senses with heavenly cords, and scourged our spirits out of all control—and then her shape ! ”

He lost himself in recollection ; calmness changed to desire. Embracing a tree, he cooled his cheek against its bark. Greedily the night wind caught up the breath tremulously issuing from his agitated bosom. He looked for the neckcloth he had abstracted from her, but had forgotten it ; it was in his other coat. His lips were parched, his limbs trembled with desire.

The music ceased, and he seemed as though fallen from the heights to which his feelings had exalted him. His restlessness increased, for now his sensations were no longer nourished and chastened by the sweet tones of melody. Wandering around, he found himself close to Mariana's dwelling. He sat down on her threshold, and at once felt calmer. He kissed the brass ring of the knocker, and remained quiet for a time. Then in fancy he pictured her behind her curtains, in a white nightgown, with a red ribbon round her head and sunk in gentle dreams. Yea, he imagined himself so close to her that she must of necessity dream of him. His thoughts were lovely as the spirits of twilight ; peace and desire alternately thrilled his heart, while love, with trembling finger, played thousandfold upon the strings of his soul. The very music of the spheres seemed silently to hover over him, that it might surprise the tender melodies of his heart.

If the master key wherewith to open Mariana's door had been with him, he could no longer have restrained himself, but would have penetrated the sanctuary of love. So he sauntered, half dreaming, under the trees, and slowly retired. Several times he was on the point of returning home, but always came back. Finally, as he at last made up his mind, and glanced round from the corner, it seemed to him as though Mariana's door opened, and a black figure emerged. He was too far off to see distinctly, and before he could collect himself, or observe more closely, the vision had vanished into night, though he fancied he saw

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

it pass in front of a white house a long way off. He stood blinking, and ere he could recover sense and run after it, the form had disappeared amid the numerous lanes. Like a man whose whole horizon has been illuminated by a flash of lightning, and who with dazzled eyes thereafter seeks the former figures, and to trace his path through the darkness, so was it before his eyes, so was it in his heart.

Like a midnight ghost, creating dreadful fear, which, though a moment later it can be explained as a child of terror, yet tosses the soul with endless alternations of doubt, so was it with him, as, leaning against a corner, he noted neither the grey of morning nor the cry of the cock. At last the early morning traffic, which began to stir around him, drove him through his postern-door to his own room.

By the time he reached home he had almost reasoned this illusion from his mind by the most cogent arguments; but the delicious sensations of the night, upon which he now reflected as upon a vision, were past and gone. To refresh his heart, and to impress a seal upon his revived faith, he drew the neckcloth from the other pocket. The rustling of a note, which fell from its folds, caused him to withdraw the cloth from his lips. Picking it up, he read :

“By my love for thee, little simpleton, what was the matter with thee yesterday? I am coming to-night. I can well believe thou art sorry to go away from here; but have patience, I will come to the . . . Fair also. But hearken—do not put that dark greenish-brown dress on again, it makes thee look like the Witch of Endor. Didn't I send thee a white dressing-gown, that I might hold a little white lamb in my arms? Send me your letters by the old bawd; the devil himself has chosen her to be our Iris.

“N.”

SECOND BOOK

CHAPTER I

WILHELM was now convalescent, and Werner came faithfully every evening after business hours, just as he had been accustomed to do during the worst period of his friend's illness, in order, by narration, reading, or even by mere presence, to divert him from those secret thoughts, in which the unhappy youth still chewed the cud of his misfortunes, and found pleasure in eating out his heart.

On one occasion Wilhelm, awaking from slumber in the evening twilight, discovered, on parting his bed-curtains to get up, that Werner had entered and, not wishing to disturb him, was seated in a window with a book.

"Why did you not tell them to bring a light?" said the invalid, along with his "Good evening!"—"What are you reading?"

"I found a volume of Corneille on the table," replied the other, "and opened it at his treatise on the Three Unities. I had heard so much said about them, and was curious to know what so famous an author has decided on the matter."

"Decided has he nothing," answered Wilhelm. "His article seems to me to be more a defence against over-stringent lawgivers than a law in itself, to which his successors must yield obedience."

"I soon found that I had made a mistake," replied Werner, "if I thought to settle a scale in my own soul out of these pages, by which henceforth to judge a play——"

"Even if there are rules," interrupted Wilhelm, "by which to judge a poet's work, they are not so easily applied as tape-measures and weights, or the four rules of arithmetic."

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

"I don't see that," said the other, "for if once the instructions be correct and duly established, it should be easy to see whether an author has conformed to them or not." Wilhelm was silent.

But I perceive that, in order to satisfy my reader, I shall have to link up my narrative to the end of the preceding Book.

Plague and similar virulent fevers ever rage most quickly and violently when attacking healthy and full-blooded frames, so that when misfortune overwhelmed our poor Wilhelm, his inward parts burned like a furnace. Just as when a firework tableau is prematurely kindled, so within his bosom did happiness and hope, desire and rapture, reality and dream blaze up in one common ruin. In such moments of devastating fate the onlooker is paralysed, while for the victim himself it is a blessing if his senses forsake him.

Then followed a period of clamorous, ever-recurrent and insupportable anguish. Yet even this might be regarded as a merciful provision of Nature; for in such hours Wilhelm had not yet quite lost his beloved. His agony expended itself in tirelessly renewed attempts to hold fast the blessedness which had fled from his soul, to clasp it to his imagination as still possible. For a body cannot be said to be quite dead so long as the process of decay is still going on, because those powers which vainly strive to fulfil their former functions are now working for destruction, and not until these are mutually extirpated, and the whole reduced to senseless dust and bones, does the pitiful and empty feeling of death arise, which only the breath of the Ever-Living One can requicken.

In a spirit so fresh, so altogether amiable, there was much to kill, to rend and to destroy, and the recuperative forces which dwell in youth did but add fresh food and violence to the strength of his pangs. The blow had been aimed with too deadly a stroke. Werner, who had now of necessity become his confidant, eagerly seized fire and sword to pluck out the very life of the hateful passion, the monster which consumed his friend. The opportunity

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

was so favourable, the evidence lay so to his hand, and he pursued it with such impetuosity step by step, leaving his victim not the smallest particle of comfort, such as a momentary delusion might procure, and stopping up every avenue of escape, so that at last Nature, not wishing her darling to perish, struck him down with sickness, to give him a little air from the other side.

A virulent attack of fever, with its usual sequel of physic, weariness, anxious friends around his bed, the company and love of his relations, often first manifested in our hours of distress and weakness, were all now so many distractions of a changed condition, and but a melancholy amusement. Not until he began to recover, that is, when his strength was exhausted, did he gaze with terror into the abyss of his dismal misery, a sensation like that of looking down into the blasted, hollow crater of a volcano. He now bitterly reproached himself that, after suffering so great a loss, he could yet enjoy a single painless, tranquil or indifferent moment. He looked with scorn into his own heart, and longed for tears and anguish as for a cordial. To reawaken these he called to memory all the scenes of his departed bliss. Painting them with utmost vividness, he strove to live them over again, and when he had wrought himself up to the highest possible height, when the sunshine of former days seemed once more to thrill his limbs and heave his bosom, he glanced back into the horrible abyss, feasted his eyes upon its depth, flung himself down and wrung from Nature her bitterest pangs. Thus he continued again and again to rend himself. For youth, so rich in latent force, knows not what it wastes, when to the pain produced by loss it flings also so many enforced agonies, as though wishful thereby first to give a real value to the object lost.

He was so convinced that this was the only loss, the first and last, that he could ever suffer in his life, that he spurned every consolation which represented his sorrows as capable of ever ending. Every joyous and else sympathetic impulse he hated for itself, nourishing, on the

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

contrary, that stagnant, crawling and self-conscious sentimentality which secretly gnaws at the very marrow of life. Slight feverish movements, the aftermath of his illness, crept into his innermost frame, and were nourished by a false diet both of body and soul. He fled from the face of man, and confined himself to his room, which he could never make warm enough. Coffee, hitherto unknown to him, began to be taken as medicine, at first once a day, then twice, and at last became indispensable. This agreeable and universally-introduced poison, both of body and purse, had the most dangerous effect upon him. His fancy became peopled with black and easily excited images, out of which his imagination accustomed itself to construct a restless drama, which chose as its theatre of action the *Inferno* of Dante. The transient false exaltation conferred upon the spirit by this treacherous juice is too delicious, once experienced, to be renounced. The exhaustion and staleness which succeed its use are so dreary that one is driven to fresh indulgence, in order to recover the original condition.

Tea also, a worthy, though distant, relative of the pernicious bean, was usually ordered in the evening as a good boon companion, and to cheer the domestic tedium. And as wine, too, was not always taken in moderation when good friends sat around the board, and conversation flowed most freely under its stimulus, there arose from these and other complications a nauseous discomfort throughout his whole being. He was plagued by spurious moods, his opinions grew confused and exaggerated, so that one could hardly recognise him for the youth of earlier days.

Unhappily this condition, as indescribable as it is unendurable, will be well understood by many, who, like our friend, look upon themselves as extraordinary physical and moral phenomena, and attribute those emotions which torment them to the energy of their hearts, the power of their spirits; yet with a little more system in diet, and somewhat more of Nature in their enjoyments, they might, to their own great satisfaction and that of their families,

become right decent and truly natural men. Yes, allow me, friends, to add, that to me you often seem like a gentle little brook, into which boys carry pebbles to make it ripple.

The remnants of that first sickness still lingered in Wilhelm's veins. Owing to his manner of life, Nature could not be reconducted into her accustomed even ways. He shunned every form of recreation and movement. He found contentment in dressing-gown, slippers and night-cap and, finally also, his happiness in a pipe of tobacco. There was nothing wanting now to change him completely—him, the well-educated, the cleanly, the free-spirited—into one of those men, often without brains or inward call, who cower like cobblers on their stool over half-comprehended books.

And he, too, would have perished, had not his native strength delivered him, which ever strove after the upright and the pure. The more tightly these physical chains were drawn around him, so much the more did his inward vigour struggle for release, until, on the first opportunity, it broke loose and grubbed up the entire edifice. In vain did anyone hope to restrain its onslaught. With the wisdom of an experienced disciplinarian it took decisive measures, seized every evil by the root, turned the uppermost to the bottom, cast out all that was too coarse, consumed the finer, and, merciless in its irresistible operation, several times brought our friend to the very gate of death. But its cure was fundamental. Everything foreign or false was driven out, and, to his future happiness, the well-built frame fully restored in its innermost proportions. True, his forces augmented so slowly that his friends often feared relapse. In these moments of extremest danger he renounced all life, which seemed to lie behind him; he had been loosened from the world, and the sense of peace created by this feeling seemed like a kindly climate, whence the convalescent drew the limpid balsam of life. Henceforth he again thankfully accepted from the fountain of life that which in the fury of his disease he had flung away and trodden under foot; and so for a second time was

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

led back into life, and, on the first return of cheerfulness, fell like a child upon his former toys.

That which lay nearest to him was his theatre books. One after the other, he read with much pleasure, the best plays which nevertheless here and there seemed different from what they once appeared.

Of one such volume Werner had turned over the leaves during Wilhelm's midday rest, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter.

CHAPTER II

WERNER could not endure that Wilhelm should let a conversation drop and remain for a time sunk in his own thoughts. As this was never attributable to disdain, he felt that on such occasions his friend's heart softly closed, that his active soul retired to regions whither no prudently minded comrade would accompany him. Werner held, therefore, that the object of friendly intercourse is mutual instruction, interchange of doubts, that one party should convince the other, and that in this way they should compare each other.

But Wilhelm seemed here and there to have noticed that the spirit of man constitutes an individual whole which can never unite itself to another, although they may touch at more or less points. And to this experience he was certain soon to attain; for a being in process of making has but little in common with the fully developed, even with those of his own kind. And that which floated before him as truth hung by so many threads, was so concise, so full of visions, so easy to be only felt, that he was scarcely ever able to carry on a conversation and to state roundly and clearly what he wanted.

As a boy he had shown a remarkable love for great, splendid words and sayings. He adorned his spirit with them as with a precious robe, and joyed in them as though they were his own, like a child over its outward adornment. Later on, as the youth began to feel himself from within

outwards, and his mind came into work and action, he began to despise words, holding the things which welled up within him as unspeakable. For him they were not to be apprehended in words; everything stretched too far asunder to be bounded by the narrow, timorous bonds of definite expression, and this especially when anyone contradicted him; for he found his greatest pleasure in continuous communication to a willing listener of the matter where-with his soul was charged, of which fact we have already seen examples, and shall yet have more. But, on the other hand, he was not at all fitted for dialogue. He did not find it easy to transpose himself into the opinions of others, and when the thread of his ideas was broken by the attack of an opponent, he introduced, for the sake of greater perspicuity, things, comparisons, stories and quotations which had no visible connection whatsoever with the subject under discussion. The opposing party consequently always remained in the right, and when, after defending himself with his utmost vivacity, he finally took refuge in paradoxes and appeals to heaven and earth, he was usually outvoted and laughed to scorn. In this way he had gradually accustomed himself to struggle quietly towards the sun, that it might mature and expand his wings. But more especially of late, since the great focus to which he attached everything had been swept away from him, he seemed generally as though he could accommodate himself to nothing.

Werner gently tried to pick up the thread of the dropped conversation. "If you have no objection, and do not want me to read you something, explain to me in some sort how it stands with the Three Unities, and what one must think of them."

"My head is not quite clear," said Wilhelm, "or else I would gladly do as you ask. Yet I must confess that the more I ponder the matter, the more I am convinced that it is dangerous to seek a way into dramatic life from that side."

"But give me some idea," retorted Werner. "Do you reject these rules and the Three Unities entirely?"

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

“ If you only knew,” answered Wilhelm, “ what conceptions you confuse in these words ! I withdraw myself from no rule taken from observation of the nature and quality of a thing ; neither do I despise these so-called Unities, because they belong partly to the necessities of a play, and partly to its adornment. I only regard as clumsy the methods adopted for the enforcement of these otherwise good and useful dogmas, because they tend to fetter our thought and hinder our recognition of the true proportions. If one were to divide a man into soul, body, hair and clothes, the absurdity of such a doctrine would soon strike you, although you could not deny that all these several parts are to be found on your own person. And the other is not much better and equally unphilosophical, if more closely examined. A tally-stick on which things of every diverse value are notched in a row.

“ Unity of treatment, taken in its higher sense, makes the glory not only of a drama, but of every poem, and this, I imagine, is indispensable. But after this how many important things remain to be dealt with before we come to place and time, about which so much is to be said, and concerning which one must make allowances to almost all authors. Nay, if unity must be the final rule, why only three, and not a dozen ? The unity of manners, tone, speech, of character in itself, of dress, of decoration and illumination and whatever else you like. If it means anything at all, what is unity if not an inward wholeness, agreement with oneself, propriety and probability ?

“ And in how many different ways this phrase has been used as an art word ! In each of the so-called Unities it signifies something different. Unity of treatment means partly simplicity of treatment, partly the skilful and intimate union of several. Unity of place means identity, unchangeability or limitation of place. Unity of time in that case means a brief, comprehensible and in some degree probable measure of the same. You will therefore agree with me that these things ought not to have been thus ranged alongside or one after the other. Consequently, in my examination of the drama I have cast these old

formulæ quite out of my mind, in order to find a more natural and correct way. Yet I am thereby all the more careful to seek out what thoughtful men have written on the subject. In fact quite lately I have read a translation of Aristoteles on Poesy."

"Tell me something about it," replied Werner.

"I really don't know yet," said Wilhelm, "how to make anything of the whole. One ought first to have read several of his writings, so as to be more familiar with his method, and especially to acquire a fuller acquaintance with classical times than I possess. Nevertheless I have noted some very fine passages in the book, and have collated, expounded and commented thereupon in my own fashion."

"I cannot possibly abandon the hope," replied Werner, "of obtaining some detailed and definite scale by which to judge the merits of a piece."

"You are quite mistaken," answered Wilhelm, "if you imagine that any man can immediately furnish another with such a scale. One must give attention to a subject for a long time, and learn to know it intimately; for not until then can we really understand what intelligent and learned men have thought about it. As the poet precedes the critic, we must know, read and hear a great deal before making up our minds to pronounce judgement. And this without taking into account that it is better for one who is not of the trade to resign himself to his natural feelings, and not ruminate long, provided only that the poet or dramatist gives him pleasure."

"That was always my opinion," replied Werner, "until lately folks began to talk so much and quite puzzled me. For example, I found great pleasure in 'The Merry Cobbler,' or 'The Devil is Loose,' and saw, too, how everybody else enjoyed them. But some people, who are reckoned connoisseurs, took me to task over my delight, mocked my bad taste and forthwith proved their case at great length. One doesn't like to stand as though he had received a slap in the mouth, especially when he has a pair of eyes like anybody else."

Wilhelm replied: "It is harder than people imagine to

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

be just. I will tell you how I institute my enquiries, for I see we shall not otherwise come to the point. For a long time, and especially since my illness has left me opportunity for reading, I have been seeking to find out what belongs to the essence of a tragedy, and what thereby is merely accidental. Certainly more study is needed for this than I have yet been able to give ; for a man should know the history of tragedy from its earliest origin, together with the theatre of most nations and the greater part of their plays. He must investigate those parts in which they should agree before we can reckon them as good plays, and those wherein they may freely differ from each other. It was our good Councillor of Legation, R—— who first brought me upon this line of thought—the same who pleased you so well. But I perceive that this is no subject for me. I wanted to make a start with the French theatre and took up Corneille. But scarcely had I read a few plays, when such a ferment was set up in my head that an irresistible longing arose within me to compose something of the same sort myself.”

“ You would be sure to write it down,” said Werner ; “ let me see some of it. You always make such a secret of your work. If my wife had not betrayed you, I should never have known how much you have written.”

“ Perhaps I may find an hour,” answered Wilhelm, “ when I feel sufficiently frivolous to render you account of the childhood of my endeavours. I am persuaded that with thousands of authors and others who devote themselves to talents and arts, it has happened precisely as with me. An impulse of youthful imitativeness leads our kindred spirits along well-trodden ways ; the great examples spur us on, the beginnings are found easy, and we enter flippantly upon a path, whose difficulties and length we first perceive when we have traversed a part of the way. Habit and taste bid us persevere—usually with inward resentment and a troubled consciousness that we lag far behind those whom we thought to outrun. Reach my Corneille here and read me a few scenes from the part in which Cinna appears.”

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

Werner did so, and as his declamation of French verse was not good, Wilhelm at last seized the book and read with much fire and exaltation of spirit, so that finally Werner exclaimed : " Splendid ! extraordinary ! "

" But tell me," cried Wilhelm, " is it not so with you as well ? Must not these situations mightily impress any human soul ? Yet on the whole they are so singular, so simple, so lovely ! It is all so great, yet appears so natural ! Although one's deepest sympathy is stirred, yet one dare not think himself in such a position ; one is and remains a spectator, and waits for these higher beings to show how they will behave. Yes, when an author has force and verve, when he is capable of presenting in living form what we others only think and imagine ; when we behold our demigods take every important step with decision and firmness, and how, even in the most dreadful situations, their conduct is robust and whole-hearted, how satisfied we feel, with what grateful delight we return when the embarrassments, the divided sentiments, so winsomely uneasy, so in harmony with all these terrors, are laid to rest in our hearts. It seems to me that, whether a man merely hanker after something new and strange, or surrender his heart to participation, he must always find satisfaction in such a theme.—I beg you to read the whole play ; yes, be sure to read it ! "

" You have made me quite curious, and also about his other works. Are they equal to this ? "

" As a man can never be quite equal to himself, nor ever quite different."

" His fellow countrymen have called him The Great ; though some, if I am not mistaken, dispute his title to such high honour."

" What name he merits as poet I dare not decide. I admire what is above me, but judge it not. So much I know—he had certainly a great heart. A profound inward independence is the basis of all his characters ; force of spirit under all circumstances is what he most loves to depict. Granted perhaps, that in his younger works this sometimes appears as rhodomontade, and in his

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

older plays withers up to hardness, yet he always remains a noble soul whose utterances do us good."

"But ought one to be able to form so positive an opinion of an author from his works? It needs no great art to be noble and magnanimous in a tragedy, to give away a kingdom or renounce a lover, to risk one's life or do a lot of other things, which in ordinary life a king, I wager, would shrink from like any other man. On the boards everybody can make his princes play the hero as he likes."

"A man can really play the hero as little on the boards as anywhere else, unless he has a great vein in him. When an author with a little, narrow soul elaborates a noble theme, he will always seek greatness in the wrong place, he will at once exaggerate and become absurd, and not a soul will give him credit for it; whereas the truly noble always wins applause and admiration. How every cruel passion excites us to horror, each mournful fate to sympathy; how falsehood bids us despise, and violent abuse of power provokes to hatred; how all these manifold emotions, singly or united, stir our hearts! Verily, the man who has a lofty human sense of all this, whom Nature has created a poet, so that he can produce these effects as imbued with real life, he it is who throughout the ages will thrill and sway the human soul."

Werner now sought to change the topic of conversation, as being too exciting for Wilhelm's present state of health, hoping at last to learn something of the young poet's own work. But try as he might, he found it impossible to penetrate these secrets, at least for this evening. Wilhelm was too full of Corneille's imagery, or rather of Corneille's ideals, as they floated in his mind, and regarded his own works as the scribbling paper of school exercises, which, after a lad has covered it with writing, is usually cut into curl-papers. He felt a repugnance which his feelings would not permit him to surmount. Truly a rare case with any author, or, indeed, with men in general. For as a rule Nature has so happily interwoven us with ourselves that we do not easily look upon another man, his achievements and possessions, without returning, with

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

a sense of pleasurable anticipation, upon ourselves, to enjoy our own, no matter how small by comparison. Thou gentle mother ! how wisely and tenderly, and with what frugal abundance, thou hast furnished out each mortal's narrow little household !

At last Werner arose, especially as he noted that in the fervour of their discussion his friend was becoming too deeply agitated. He therefore deferred his attempt to another evening, when, indeed, it met with more success.

CHAPTER III

A DAY or two later he caught Wilhelm unawares and found him turning over a quantity of papers, some of which he concealed on Werner's entrance. These were letter-notes from Mariana and other scraps referring to her.

"Have you any of your writings at hand ?" said the new arrival, "if so, show me them."

"If you will not call them writings, but give the child its right name, I will submit to make myself ridiculous."

Meanwhile he raked the open sheets together, and was glad to get them well out of sight ; for the thought disturbed him that Werner might insist on his destroying all remaining mementos of Mariana, and that the letters, whose survival he would suspect, might have to be committed to the flames. He therefore brought out a packet, from which, when untied, there fell a number of thin or thicker bundles, besides loose sheets and leaves.

"Ah !" thought Wilhelm to himself, as he untied the knot, "I hoped never to open you again ! How changed my fortune since last I tied you up !" For he had laid this collection aside among the things to be taken with him on his flight. "Touch nothing !" he exclaimed, as the inquisitive friend stretched out a hand. "You forget that these papers lie one after the other in chronological order."

"That is well done," said the other, "one can so much the better see how you have progressed."

"I am afraid the shades of difference will entertain

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

neither me nor anybody else in days to come. But first I must warn you that you will find many plans, many single scenes and partly-written plays, but hardly anything finished."

"Wonderful! Has it happened with you as with so many young authors of whom I have heard speak?"

"Oh, that it were so with all! We should not have so many little works inflicted upon us, which always remain incomplete, though finished. Neither would everyone be so ready to rush in, tempted by childish example and the feeling that he, too, can produce similar stuff, and our literature would not have become like a wine-house, in which the least may swagger with contentment, because he can always find an equal with whom to touch glasses. So then here, first of all, a few acts and scenes after the manner of Plautus."

"Plautus? How did you come by him?"

"We were construing him with our master, for I was to learn also a little Latin. He was the first poet of the theatre whose acquaintance I made, and was imitated on the spot. I have already told you about our puppet-plays and epi-dramatic impromptus, which lacked nothing but the dialogue."

"Read me some of it."

"God forbid! It is dreadful stuff. You can imagine it: there is a grumpy old miser, who is cheated, a servant who cheats, a young man in love, who doesn't know how to help himself. You may imagine that the old man is not old, the young one not young, nor the servant servile; but that they act and speak about as vulgarly as Plautus himself would make them do or say."

Wilhelm might have added: "In every art the learner at first creates from his model merely what he sees in it, and is therein only different by some few degrees from many masters; for they mostly merely re-create their predecessors, or, in the best of cases, from Nature, what they perceive in her. How rarely does a man arise, who from his own inward strength glorifies truth and creates super-excellence!"

“Meanwhile,” continued Wilhelm, “I was always compelled to tolerate that all sorts of figures should play their games in my head. For these were by no means voluntary; everything I read or heard narrated was at once re-enacted in me, and the more I continued to devour theatrical plays, so much the more was a theatre—if I may say so—erected in my head, within whose bounds all these things took place. And here, friend, you may see specimens of later times ! ”

“How ! what ! verses ! pastoral names ! ”

“Alexandrines in every form, and heroic pastoral plays ; these were a species that delighted me beyond measure. You will see that two among them are complete, while a whole troop of unfinished ones follow after.”

“You must let me take some of them with me, just for fun.”

“Gladly, for you will have a hearty laugh over the seriousness with which they are treated. My chief personages, all born to princely rank, who by strange mischance have lost their kingdoms, will be found as unknown wanderers sheltering in the quiet dwellings of hospitable shepherds. What a contrast of passions and characters ! What wealth of imagery ! What alternations of narrative and description ! Truly this kind was made for the author as a child, who merrily introduces everything everywhere. All that tragedy possesses of sublimity or pathos, all that is exhilarating in comedy, all that is delectable in the pastoral play you can rake together here into one bundle.”

“But ought one not to be able to make good plays of this kind ? ”

“Certainly ; and such have been already made. Only mine were not so. A boy who doesn’t know himself, who knows nothing of men, who from the works of the masters may possibly have assimilated just what pleased him, how should such an one write poetry ? ”

“But whence did you procure such a mass of material ? ”

“Whence ? Out of my imagination, which was like a living armoury of puppets and shadow-images, everlast-

ingly in movement. Just as card-players are never tired of striving one against the other with a few bits of paste-board, and find delight in the multitudinous combinations by which the inscribed or arbitrarily assigned values of these heroes make them sometimes terrible to each other, and at others lay the king at the feet of the knave, so did my few figures ceaselessly play among themselves. What in earlier times were only puppets, theatre or masque, now became afflated by a gentle spirit, the forms grew fairer, more seductive, and you can well believe that here also it was the spirit of love which revealed its quickening power."

"And of this I shall find traces among these papers?"

"Oh, yes, on every page, and of the author, too. I began now to feel for myself, to relate romances concerning myself, and then indeed my fancy roamed afar. There was nothing to prevent my being as handsome, as good, as magnanimous, as passionate, as miserable or as furious as I liked. I complicated my adventures at will, and unravelled them as I thought good. And as I gave myself up to pure verse, I was doubly and trebly delighted when each was ended, except for the fact that during the work I mostly imagined myself grown wiser than I had seemed when making the plan, so that many pieces suffered great alterations, and most of my enterprises ended in disaster."

Werner had meanwhile glanced through the sheets and read a few tirades. "The verses are not bad," he said.

"I thought so, too, at the time. Having no one who could tell me a word on the subject, Gottsched's 'Stage' was the scale by which I measured my plays, and to me they always appeared even more interesting in contents, and equal in harmonious versification to my model, whereat I felt not a little pleased, since in my inexperience I regarded all my examples as classic."

"Did nobody help you to write these verses?"

"Who could do so? Besides, no man can help another to write verses; that was the least of my difficulties! From childhood I have been able to speak or write in any metre I might hear or read. The mould was ready in my

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

head, if only the matter which I had to pour into it had been worth anything."

"That will come, if you persevere and practise in your leisure hours."

"In leisure hours," said Wilhelm with a profound sigh.

"Oh, yes," replied Werner, "you will always find time, for you are not fond of miscellaneous society, and do not frequent the coffee house."

"How greatly you err, dear friend, if you fancy that such a work, whose imaginings fill the whole soul, can be executed in broken hours of miserly thrift. No, the poet must live entirely for himself, entirely in his beloved theme. He who is inwardly endowed from Heaven with its most costly gifts, who has received from Nature imperishable wealth, must also be inwardly undisturbed, must live among his treasures in a felicity, such as the rich, surrounded by heaped-up goods, vainly endeavour to create. Behold mankind, how eager its pursuit of happiness and pleasure; how its wishes, its labour, its gold, its time are restlessly urging forward—and what after? After that which the poet has received from Nature, after enjoyment of the world, after sympathy with himself in others, after harmonious association with many oft incongruous things. What is it which disquiets men, except that they cannot combine their conceptions with the things about them, that enjoyment slips away through their fingers, that desire is too late fulfilled, and that possession fails so to affect the heart as in the eagerness of anticipation they had hoped? But Fate has set the poet like a god above all this. He sees how the medley of passions, families and kingdoms aimlessly circulates, he beholds the inextricable enigma of misunderstandings, often needing but a monosyllable for their solution, and notes how these produce unspeakable and irreparable confusions. He partakes the sorrows and joys of every human destiny. As the man of the world crawls through his days in gnawing melancholy over grievous loss, or meets his fate with extravagant rapture, so does the receptive, quickly-stirred spirit of the poet step like the

wandering sun from night to day, and tune, with easy transfer, his harp to joy or grief. Native-born upon the soil of his heart blooms the lovely flower of wisdom, and while others dream awake, and are frightened out of their senses by monstrous imaginations, he lives the dream of life as one awake, and whatever marvels may happen, they are to him both past and future. Thus, then, the poet is at once both teacher, prophet and friend of gods and men. How can you desire then that he should befoul himself with a base employment; he, moulded like a bird to fly around the world, to build his nest in the air, and, lightly skimming from bough to bough, to seek nurture from buds and fruits, must he tug like an ox at the plough, submit to be harnessed like a dog to a cart, or bound, perchance, with a chain, to protect a farmyard by his barking?"

Werner had listened with amazement, and, as may be well imagined, found little reality in these words. "If only men were made like birds," he interrupted, "so that, without weaving or spinning, they could spend their life in happy plenty! If on the arrival of winter they could as easily escape to distant lands, avoiding want and secure against frost!"

"Thus did the poets live in times when Nature was more venerated, and thus ought they ever to live. Amply furnished within, their needs were small; the gift of imparting noble sentiments, glorious images, to men in sweet seductive words and melodies wrought ever like a charm upon the world and brought rich inheritance to the poets. At the courts of kings, at the tables of the rich, on the threshold of the lover men listened to them, closing ear and heart against everything else, even as we count ourselves blest, and halt with delight when, from the thicket through which we roam, the voice of the nightingale pours out its plaintive note. They found a hospitable world, and their seeming lowly rank did but ennoble them the more. The hero lingered on their song, the world's subduer paid homage to the poet, feeling that, without him, his own prodigious being would but pass as doth the tempest; the lover yearned to feel desires and raptures

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

as thousandfold, as harmonious as those depicted by these inspired lips ; nay, even to the rich his idolised possessions did not seem so precious in his own eyes as when illuminated for him by the splendour of a spirit which felt and exalted all true worth. Yea, tell me, who is it that has created gods, lifted us up to them, brought them down to us, if not the poet ? ”

“ It is a pity,” thought Werner to himself, “ that my otherwise sensible friend raves so extravagantly on this point.”

“ Yea, my friend,” continued the other, “ what bliss to be able to devote oneself exclusively to such an existence ! Bethink only, how many men believe themselves gifted, if they can produce their thoughts in metre with a certain degree of facility, can deck them with agreeable rhymes, while the soul which alone makes the poet is lacking. How eagerly thousands long for this endowment, and how vainly they strive to attain it.”

“ I have heard the opinion from many sensible people that numbers of these might far better employ their time and strength.”

“ I believe that many deceive themselves ; but also that some are mistaken in this point concerning others. The inborn passion for poesy can be as little checked as any other natural instinct without ruining the person who possesses it. And as an awkward man, whom we punish, usually commits a second fault in his earnest endeavour to make good the first, so the poet, in trying to escape from poetry, first becomes truly a poet.”

“ Have you felt this irresistible impulse ever since childhood ? ”

“ That you can see from these papers, and yet this is only the hundredth part of what I have written, and the thousandth part of what I have conceived. Unhappily my desires have not carried me far, and I look upon these remnants with sadness and contempt. There is nothing in them all of any value.”

“ Perhaps you are mistaken in saying so.”

“ Oh, no, I know them too well ; I never could flatter

myself for long, except with hope. I hoped that the deep longing of my heart would bring me nearer to the object of my desire, and how great was that desire I cannot tell you. Especially were my wishes directed towards tragedy, whose dignity had always an incredible charm for me. I still remember a poem, which must lie somewhere among these, in which the Muse of Tragic Poetry and another female form, in whom I had personified Trade, contended stoutly for my worthy person. The conception is vulgar, and I do not recollect whether the verse was worth anything or not; but you ought to see it for the sake of the fear and disgust, the love and passion which rule throughout. It is childish and insipid, written without any serious thought, but on that very account proves more clearly what it was meant to prove. With what an anxious soul I depicted the ancient house-mother, with her skirt tucked up into her girdle, keys by her side, spectacles on nose, ever busy, ever restless, quarrelsome and thrifty, petty and tedious! How hard I made the condition of such as bowed beneath her rod, and earned their daily bread in the sweat of their brows! And how different the appearance of the other! What a revelation for burdened hearts! Glorious in form! In mien and conduct visibly a daughter of freedom! The consciousness of herself lent her dignity without pride. Her dress became her, draping every limb, yet without restraint, while the ample folds of stuff repeated, like a thousandfold echo, each graceful movement of my divinity. What a contrast! and you can easily think to which side my heart inclined. Nor was anything forgotten which might distinguish my Muse: crown and dagger, chain and mask, all as my predecessors had transmitted them, were here also assigned to her. The dispute grew hot, and you can imagine the contrast between the speech of two such persons; for in one's fourteenth year one can generally paint black and white with sufficient distinctness. The old crone talked as befitted a woman who picks up a pin, and the other as one who dispenses kingdoms. The warning threats of the elder were treated with scorn, and

already I had turned my back upon her promised wealth. Disinherited and naked, I surrendered to the Muse, who flung me her golden veil and covered up my nakedness."

"Do not forget to look it out, for I am curious to know these two women. What mad stuff runs in one's head sometimes in youth!"

"May I confess it, friend, and you will not think me ridiculous if I say that these images still pursue me, and that, if I search well my heart, their pursuit is as serious—nay, more so—than before. But then, what else is left now for me, unhappy one? Ah! who could have told me beforehand that the arms of my spirit, with which I stretched out into the Infinite, and hoped certainly to grasp something great, would be so soon broken. Whoever had told me this in advance would have brought me to despair. And yet now, when the verdict has fallen upon me, now that I have lost her who, instead of that goddess, was to have led me on to my desire, what have I left but to resign myself to bitterest sorrow? O my brother," he continued, "I will not deny it, she was to me in my secret designs like the tackle to which a rope-ladder is secured. Perilously sanguine, the adventurer sways in the air; the iron snaps, and he lies shattered at the feet of his desires. For me there is no longer any comfort, any hope! Oh, I should like," he cried springing to his feet, "to tear all these miserable papers to bits and fling them in the fire!"

In his fury he seized a couple of bundles, tore them up, and cast them on the floor. Werner was startled and could scarcely restrain him by force.

"Let me!" cried Wilhelm. "What good are the wretched sheets! For me they are no longer either ladder or encouragement; why should they survive to plague me to my life's end? Shall they then, instead of awakening sympathy and horror, some day serve as objects of the world's mockery? Alas for me and for my fate! Now first can I understand the laments of the poets—of the wretched, who through anguish became wise. Until now I regarded myself as indestructible, invulnerable:

and now, alas ! I see that an early and heavy injury can never be washed out, never again made good. I feel that I must carry it with me to the grave, that not for a single day of life may it leave me, this agony which now at last destroys me—yea, and HER memory also shall remain with me, the memory of the worthless. O my darling ! if I must speak from the heart, the memory of one who was not *quite* worthless ! Her condition, her fate, have a thousand times excused her to me. I have been too cruel ; and you, you have mercilessly imbued me with your own coldness, your severity, have held my shattered senses in bondage, and prevented me doing for her and for myself what I owed unto us both. God knows to what condition I have reduced her ; and now, little by little, the despair and helplessness in which I have left her begin to weigh upon my conscience. Was it not possible she might have been able to excuse herself ? was it not possible ? How many misunderstandings have misled the world ! how many circumstances may not supplicate pardon for the greatest fault ! How often do I imagine her sitting alone in quiet, leaning upon her elbow ! ‘ This,’ says she, ‘ is the faith, this the love he swore ! and with such ungentle stroke to end the delicious life which bound us into one ! ’ ”

He broke into a flood of tears, casting himself with his face upon the table, and moistening the scattered papers with his tears. Werner stood by in the utmost embarrassment. He did not expect this rapid transition of passion. Several times he had tried to interrupt the torrent of Wilhelm’s speech, several times to lead the conversation into another channel. But it was in vain ! He could not withstand the flood !

But even here their enduring friendship once more performed its office. Allowing the violence of the outburst to run its course, Werner began to arrange the papers, gathered them together, made a mark to show where they had stopped, put a few packets in his pocket, extracted a promise from Wilhelm that he would safely preserve the rest and allow him on a future occasion to go further

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

through them with him. And thus they parted. Wilhelm sunk in the quiet after-quiverings of his sorrow, and the other alarmed by this fresh outbreak of a passion which he had believed long since mastered and subdued by his own good counsel and persuasion.

CHAPTER IV

O bid me welcome, shadows deep and gracious !
Beneath your shade I breathe an air more spacious ;
Thou gleaming pool, thou tree, whom I accost,
Restore the calm my stricken soul hath lost.

Thou trunk, which still, whatever human sorrow,
Hast firmly stood through many a quiet morrow,
And round thy feet of children bred a crowd,
Whose head, like ours, the tempest oft hath bow'd,
Now rooted fast, with manly, sturdy sinews,
Doth brave the elements while time continues,
My breast, enduring one, with courage thrill,
To face, like thee, misfortune's direst ill.

O breeze, that every tranquil billow dimples,
And on my brow each ringlet gently crimples,
From bough to bough dost fickle rambles take,
With every breath a thousand branches shake ;
Oh, canst thou not, on pinions kindly tender,
To my unquiet breast thy comfort render ?

Yet ah ! no bliss I here may hope to find,
I fled the court, the swarm remain'd behind.
I left them there in walls' securest cover,
With friendly eye to ambush each the other,
Forsook the retinue of wealth and might,
The flatt'rer's tongue, uneasy pomp's delight,
And hoped, by Nature's balmy, sweet assistance,
And all alone, to find renew'd existence ;
But ah ! my thoughts, unfetter'd, unconfined,
The ancient anguish here redoubled find !

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

ONE fine day in spring our two friends, accompanied by Wilhelm's sister, now Werner's wife, set out for a walk towards a neighbourhood which had greatly attracted them both since childhood. They reached a spot where they had often been accustomed to play with each other as children, and where also as youths they had exchanged hopes for the future. The married couple seated themselves under an ancient oak and enjoyed the lovely prospect. Wilhelm paced to and fro, and recited with great sincerity the above soliloquy in presence of the surrounding objects. For, in fact, he generally found some lines from a play or other poem ready in his head for almost every occasion, and when alone, or the company was congenial, never restrained himself. Indeed, the action was often mechanical, and a mere verbal reminiscence sufficed to make him discharge a portion of his store.

Werner at once remembered having read this monologue in one of those pastoral pieces which his friend had recently entrusted to him. Since then he had not ventured to recur to the topic, fearing a return of the same passionate anguish. But now that the critical words of the concluding lines revealed his friend as dangerously near to his darling sentiment, he could think at the moment of no other means of turning him away from its contemplation than to talk of the pieces themselves, so as to divert his unquiet spirit to calmer discourse. He was not deceived, and his plan succeeded; for not always have the same things the same effect; for diversity of place and circumstance often changes a theme completely.

"I have," said he, "already read this passage with much pleasure in 'The Queenly Anchorite,' and copied out a part of it."

"I should not like to be guilty," replied Wilhelm, "of immodesty, or of excessive humility. The passage may be pretty fair, if I could only justify it, and many others like it, in the places where they stand. This is a fault into which one so easily falls: to launch out into elegiac sentiments, to linger upon descriptions and similes, which are really and truly the death of true drama,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

which, indeed, can only be estimated by its steadily advancing action. This fault runs through all the plays I have hitherto written, for which reason, though they may contain tolerable passages, they would be condemned by all masters of the art."

"So far as I am concerned," said Werner, "the fine passages are what I enjoy best of the whole piece, for one takes note of them and may make some use of them."

"I do not object, so long as they do not hinder the progress of the action. Nay more, I am convinced that a good play may have many powerful passages, and, if you like, may consist altogether of excellent stanzas, although these may not be suitable for writing singly into albums. I was myself carried away by that complaint, so prevalent among the public, and am indebted for my cure, not to myself, but to my excellent friend R——, to whom I submitted a few of my compositions. How happy I should have been had he been able, much to my profit, to prolong his stay among us. What is there that is admirable, for instance, in the play you mentioned, and from which I just now recited a part? Merely the desire, so universal among men, to escape from perplexing surroundings and enjoy under harmless trees an undivided life, such as is sometimes granted us on summer evenings! How many hundred poems, good or bad, have not been declaimed on this theme? Take away the verses which pourtray this sentiment, and which at any rate might have formed a passable elegy, take out also perhaps a few similes, which might adorn an epic poem, and what remains is either childish and common, or else untrue and exaggerated. How can you wish then that I should think anything reasonably good of such a play?"

"The author, I notice," said Werner in reply, "is seldom an impartial judge of his own works; he either rates them too high or too low. I only wish the piece could be printed or performed; we should see then what sort of appreciation it met with."

"From this may God deliver me," exclaimed Wilhelm,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

“that I should provide occasion for spoiling the public. This I desire just as little as to be spoiled by it; for this as I observe, is what mostly occurs through the mutual honour and complaisance evinced by each to the other. If ever I appear publicly, I should wish to please, yes, and to please universally; for I have generally regarded those authors as either not honest or very conceited, who only dedicate their works to the connoisseur, and class all whom these do not please among the herd of non-connoisseurs. Good stuff must naturally first be proved by the intelligent, and, if I may say so, must first be stamped; but it should also, if it be human, produce a generally happy effect, and especially upon those who are not able to judge it. And I believe that he has reached the highest point, who can unite upon himself these two verdicts, which, when taken together—if I may here apply the Latin proverb—alone constitute the voice of the gods.

“And he may well reflect upon himself with some degree of self-gratulation, since both nobles and people combine for his election. Ah! if only one could be directed earlier upon the right path! For it is just through this and similar faults that I have lost all the labour expended upon my tragedies, which, as my learned friend revealed to my eyes, except for few and occasional passages, which are by no means either novel or sublime, mostly bristle with false and simulated theatrical passion, puffing out their cheeks with ordinary moral sayings, and meanwhile, quite forgetting themselves, stumble clumsily along, to finish up at last, not with an exit or a *dénouement*, but with a fall and a crash.”

“You speak as though of a great number. Are there then so many? We never noticed that you were so very diligent.”

“Wherever I moved or stood, I was always making plans, and whensoever I could slip quietly aside I wrote verses. But you will not find more than three or four plays quite finished.”

“Are you sure there are no more?”

“But several for the greater part complete, while, as I

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

have already told you, a whole drove have been commenced."

His sister, who had received a basket and a few bottles from a maid who brought them some refreshment, and had meanwhile been busy arranging them on the grass, joining occasionally in the conversation, now broke in with considerable vivacity, like one who has long listened, although having much to say, and thus addressed her husband:

"It is truly a pity that he has let everything drop; for I can assure you there were some really beautiful plays, and never in my life have I seen any acted to equal them. It gave me the utmost pleasure to take them down for him, and I always noted the passages which pleased me best."

"And what sort of heroes did you choose?" asked Werner.

"You will be surprised to learn," answered Wilhelm to this, "although it was quite natural, that I sought them in the Bible."

"In the Bible!" exclaimed the other. "That is what I should least have expected."

"And yet," said Wilhelm, "it was quite natural. The earliest stories which excited our attention and filled us with wonder told of those holy men in whom God was pleased to manifest special interest. We hear about them as of our own ancestors, and the most eminent men of the most eminent nation must of necessity rank for us as the first in the world. We do not enquire why their actions are interesting, but to us these actions are remarkable simply because related concerning them."

"You said," interrupted Werner, "that some of these plays have been finished; what sort of themes were developed in these?"

"Let Amelia tell you about them," said Wilhelm, and smiled. "You will perhaps be further astonished to see the enemies of God's people appear as the chief personages of my plays. But I can assure you it was done with the most orthodox motives, for the prophets did

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

their duty honestly and told them the truth from the very start right stoutly. Horrible dreams and premonitions disturbed their consciences and left them not a peaceful hour, so that they were pretty well sated and worn out before the fifth act gave them the finishing stroke."

Amelia showed very plainly that she found it unpleasant to hear her brother turn these things to ridicule. He had at one time taken them up in bitter earnest, and she still found pleasure in them. Her husband begged her to name the heroes, and to his great amazement heard the infamous names of Jezebel and Belshazzar.

"Ho, ho!" he exclaimed, "a queen flung out of the window and a hand coming through the wall! To take these as dramatic themes, thereto belongs certainly much boldness of imagination."

"I am glad," said Wilhelm, "that the absurdity of the thing strikes you at once. It will surprise you still more to learn that it was just for this reason that I chose these stories. Be assured, it is so with many dramatic authors. In a romance or a story they find something remarkable, and at once imagine it can be so acted, and provide stuff also for four acts, though it may be as little suited for drama as my queen's *salto mortale* or the threatening magic hand."

"But how, for heaven's sake," said his brother-in-law, "did you treat these subjects?"

"Perhaps you will scarcely credit me, if I assure you that they were developed quite according to rule and with perfect dramatic propriety."

"You must read them," interrupted the sister, "for otherwise he will not tell you the truth."

"But first of all I must confess," continued Wilhelm, without noticing her insinuation, "that it was my speculating upon some fresh mode of death that brought me upon the topic of Jezebel. I saw that all my predecessors had taken an infinity of pains to employ dagger and poison and other lethal tools in every variety of method, so that for their successor hardly any fresh combination was left. So much the more, therefore, was I

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

attracted by the tumble which ended the life of an infamous queen."

Contrary to his custom, Werner broke out into loud laughter and cried: "I cannot conceive it. Was she then really flung down from above, as shown in Merian's Pictorial Bible?"

"How could you imagine such a piece of puppet-play from an experienced author? No, my play was to be acted before people of the best taste. The scene of action is a large hall, from which it never removes; and in the fifth act, in which by artificial charms and flatteries Jezebel vainly tries to move the victor, or to terrify him by threats, the hero winds up in righteous zeal, and with reproaches and curses cuts short a very well uttered speech in fairly knightly style by commanding the guards to throw her out. They seize her—and the curtain falls."

"Bravo!" cried Werner, "that was well thought out."

"I was only afraid," answered Wilhelm, "lest some day, during the performance, the curtain, through some oversight, might not come down, by which the whole effect of the tragedy would be dissolved in laughter."

"You will certainly find some really lovely passages in the play," said the sister to her husband, "and the Queen is so utterly godless that one wishes her every ill."

"Yes, it was quite true, was it not, Amelia," said Wilhelm, "that you could not bear her because she made pretensions to a young King whom you would by no means have despised for yourself?"

"Well, and what about 'Belshazzar'?" interjected Werner.

"This one at least I will not have decried," said the sister. "There are such beautiful pieces in it, all of which I learned by heart."

"Give me some idea of it," said Werner.

"My heroes," said Wilhelm, "were mostly young, because I knew of nothing more interesting than the youth which I felt in myself, so that my King Belshazzar was also a fine young fellow."

"Do you remember," asked his sister, "what the

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

foreign gentleman, whose taste you extol so highly, once said upon a walk, after reading the play that morning ? ”

“ I am convinced,” answered Wilhelm, “ that he only said it out of kindly consideration, so that I might not be quite discouraged. He declared that the young King was well depicted. But really he was only a man such as may often be found in every rank. He desires to do good, has a sentiment for righteousness and virtue, a vague, uncomfortable sort of veneration for the God of the Hebrews, an accommodating inherited obedience to his own gods, is easy-going in the rule of his kingdom, busy about his own passions, diligent in festivities and banquets, and above all things fond of amusement, in which his courtiers willingly bear their part.”

“ Come, that doesn't sound so bad,” said Werner.

“ Listen now to a monologue with which the King opens the second act,” said Amelia. “ I know it by heart.”

“ Recite it then,” responded Wilhelm. “ Meanwhile I will take a turn on the embankment, for I cannot endure to hear my work declaimed to me.”

“ How would you feel, then, if it were performed ? ”

“ I cannot say ; the occasion would show, but in any case I should be uncomfortable.” He therefore walked a little distance away from them.

“ You must imagine,” said Amelia, when he had left them, “ that it is the King's birthday, that during the night the conspirators have opened the first act, and have just departed as day breaks. The sun rises, and the King, awakened by the blast of trumpets and drums, which announces the feast to his city, tears himself from the arms of a favourite and gazes from the terrace upon the splendours of Babylon. Let me also observe that during the previous act one of the conspirators had mentioned with contempt Belshazzar's dread of thunderstorms.”

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

CHAPTER V

“What day is this, which drives sweet night
away,

And bids my slumber flee? A glorious day!
In tender arms of love I lay, and soft embraces,
Now rapture summons me to hours of golden graces;
The town re-echoes loud, and field, with music's tone
Beneath the morning sun, like Memnon's magic stone.
Song upon song I hear from thousand voices ringing,
Their monarch's glorious praise, his sovereign fortune
singing.

Unanimous they cry, from every side, to me,
The happiest among them, like a god to be.
Each hour of blissful life, oh let me thus employ it!
What more can heart desire? I have and will
enjoy it.

Pure be my fate serene as Heav'n's unsullied light!

“Ho there! what rises in the clouds? Avoid my
sight!

Shall feasts for me, the Only One, deploy their
splendours,

While thunder in my breast its dread foreboding
genders?

O feeble human heart, O lightly-captured mind!

Thy soul grows big, thou soar'st as flatt'ring tongues
design'd.

A people on its knees can swell thy pride to rapture,
And by obedience thee, its high commander, capture;
Yet, when the airy powers, inflaming, strike thee
down,

Thou, childlike, stoop'st the head that wears a saucy
crown.

“Fortune, who to my arms as darling didst resign
thee,

Come from the morning airs, with kindness entwine
me!

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

For only in thine arm can gladly I possess
What birth conferred, or thou hast gi'en my life to
bless.

Ah! how my soul aspires, with infinite ambition,
To swell my mighty realm by many a wide addition,
Through all the world to tread my haughty victor-way,
And only at its farthest sea unwillingly to stay.

But no! In vain o'er every land my fancies wander;
Heav'n speaks: 'Not thou art lord! acknowledge
Them up yonder'!

Thy slave looks up; to whom Thou seemest all
divine.

Look kindly down on him; his lot, O Lord, is Thine.
Though round thy golden shape in hundred fanes
men riot,

Yet small the space thou need'st to rest at last in quiet.

Art thou the lord of day? of gladness? or of woe?

Time carries thee away where every soul must go.

He only lives alone, and He shall live for ever,

The Heav'ns can bear Him scarce, and quake beneath
th' endeavour;

In cloud and tempest robed, His majesty appears,

While thunders bear His word to my astonish'd ears—

God speaks: 'Thou grain of dust, My vengeful
tempest scatters!

Thou art, O splendid one, the flow'r My sickle
shatters!'"

AMELIA had to repeat several couplets twice over to her husband, who praised them highly and tried to fix them in his memory. On the return of the brother a fresh dispute began very similar to that described in the preceding chapter. His sister spoke of the fragment with delight, and Werner gave it his approval in advance, because he presumed that the whole equalled this monologue in excellence.

Wilhelm had many faults to find with it, and since, while he spoke, many things were present in his mind, and was able to maintain the result of many a reflection which

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

the others had never made; since also familiar works of poetry stood before his soul, wherewith to compare his own; because moreover, like an artist conscious of the inward springs which set a work in motion, he spoke to persons who only judged by the effect it made upon them, so was it impossible to convince them, especially seeing that, carefully considered, all three were really right.

Nevertheless he ceased not to drive home again and again his favourite principle, that in drama the action, so far as it progresses and can be presented, is the chief thing, and that opinions and sensations must be completely subordinate to this ever-advancing action; nay, that the characters even may only reveal themselves in movement and through movement. This they admitted, yet at once cited examples which proved the exact contrary. Finally, he assured them that he heartily despised his works so far produced, because they were all marked by this fault. "They are," said he, "like people whom nobody values, because they talk much and do little."

This Amelia resented and said jestingly: "Show us then something of your newer things, written since you became so learned."

"That will I not," answered Wilhelm, "for I consider what I have wrought since gaining my recent perception to be pretty good, yet, although I know myself on the right road, I am afraid I may not have strength to advance upon it, or that in the end, without the guidance of a skilful master, I may again and more dangerously go astray. My older matters I hand over to your praise or blame; but let me still brood in secret over my present ones. The public leads even a master into error; while we learners, driven hither and thither by the wind, like young, slender and freshly-planted trees, never take root, and are in danger of withering. Instead then I will read you in conclusion the fragments of a brief essay which is in my pocketbook,* and which my friend sent me in reply to

* The word translated "pocketbook" is in the original "writing-desk"; but as on a country walk Wilhelm could hardly have his desk with him, the alteration will be excused.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

several questions on the subject of dramatic themes. Discussion, and indeed disputation, have often arisen among critics as to whence the pleasure comes which men experience in drama, and especially in tragedy. Various opinions have been held upon the subject and its purpose. Here you will listen to philosophical thoughts, which, though they seem to commence far away, yet leave us much food for reflection on this matter." Wilhelm looked out the paper and read :

"By his own nature, and the nature of things, man is destined to various fates ; pleasure and pain, happiness and misery in their highest degrees are alike distant and near to him. A premonition, if I may so describe it, of evil and of good is given to him, which at the same time is intimately combined with the strength to undertake and carry the burdens of life.

"In the course of days every soul is more or less prepared for what stands before it, so that mostly the extraordinary, when it occurs, and especially as soon as the first moments of surprise are over, usually appears as known and supportable. And though I will not deny that many seem to lose all restraint in presence of unexpected happiness or misfortune, yet we find also that many, to whom we could not else ascribe strength of soul, accept a strange stroke of luck with equanimity, or an overwhelming misfortune with tranquillity. We often see men, not distinguished in any way, endure pain, sickness, the loss of their dear ones, with quiet steadfastness, and even face their own death as something familiar and necessary.

"That the presentiment of good is combined in all men with a desire to possess it is natural and becomes quickly evident. But that man has also a kind of hankering after evil, and a vague longing after the enjoyment of pain is harder to observe, being related to other feelings and disguised under other symptoms, which may easily divert us from our speculation.

"It has long been said that a state of indifference is that which men most seek to avoid. As soon as soul and

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

body have been transported by sleep and rest into a condition of comfortable ease, both at once want to bestir themselves and work, stimulated, refreshed, and thus to realise their being. The longing to enjoy this allurements takes a thousand forms. The simpler man requires simpler, humbler and weaker joys ; the cultured man wants them more manifold, stronger and oft-repeated. This craving is so powerful that it seldom remains within the limits of a man's strength, so that even such as seem to be moderate, though not perhaps ending every day of their lives in drunkenness, yet consume the whole sum of their being sooner than was intended.

“ Man is inwardly stirred by every strange occurrence which meets him. An evil past and gone is for him a treasure of memory for his whole life. And the strange things which occur to other men—the story of these is always welcome, whether preserved to us from ancient times, or told to us as novelties from foreign parts of the world. But the people is most of all stirred by that which is brought before its eyes. A painted daub or childish woodcut will attract ignorant men far more than any detailed description. And how many thousands there are who in the most splendid picture can only behold the legend ! The great pictures of the ballad-singers make a far deeper impression than their songs, though these captivate the imagination with strong bands.

“ What then can impress the crowd more powerfully than when the hero himself rises from the grave before them, acts, speaks, unbosoms his inmost self, suffers, and at last perishes by the very dangers told of in poetry ? How many thousands are irresistibly attracted to an execution, which they loathe ; how the heart of the crowd quakes for the criminal, yet how many would go home dissatisfied if he were pardoned and kept his head on his shoulders ? The gushing blood which dyes the white neck of the malefactor sprinkles the imagination of the spectators with inextinguishable spots. After long years their minds glance back shudderingly, yet longingly,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

to the scaffold, permit all the dreadful details to come up again before them, yet shrink from confessing to themselves that they still gloat over the horrible spectacle. Much more welcome are those executions which the poet contrives.

“ Nothing can stir a healthy man, which ought not also to vibrate those strings of his being from which the enchanting harmonies of pleasure descend upon him. And even cruel, destructive appetites, which terrify us in children, and which we seek to drive out by punishment, have secret bypaths and retreats, whereby they are transformed into the very sweetest of pleasures. But all these inward channels and ways are thrilled through and through, as with electric sparks, by a dramatic play, and especially by a tragedy, so that rapture grips the man's soul; and the obscurer his mind, so much the greater his pleasure.

“ The ideas of men and things which people conceive are so vague, so confused, so incomplete, that an absurd *qui pro quo* does not bewilder them in the least. Charles XII. is recognised by his boots and closely-buttoned coat, but especially by his bristly hair; Henry IV. by his curled moustachios and frilled ruff, and the most contradictory representatives are gladly accepted as their deceased majesties. Indeed, I maintain that the more the theatre is purified, while it must be more agreeable to men of intelligence and taste, yet it loses ever more of its original effect and purpose. It appears to me, if I may use a simile, to be like a pond, which must not only contain clear water, but also a certain proportion of mud, water-weed and insects, if fish and water-fowl are to thrive therein.

“ As I am now obliged to lay down my pen, I see, on looking back at what I have written, that I am as confused and imperfect as any other of those who have ventured to handle such material. Permit then that by these fugitive thoughts you may be at least stirred to thought yourself. Perhaps we may ere long discuss

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

the question of puppet-plays and their distinguished daughter comedy. Nor must we thereby forget, if we would get to the bottom of the matter, either gypsies or bear-dances, nor even the dangerous leaps and contortions of wandering desperados."

Our friends were just on the point, each in his own fashion, of rolling the heavy stone of this disquisition and, if possible, knocking off some of its sharp corners (for readers are mostly so built that they like to have everything ready to their hands, so as to examine it conveniently, and then roll it before them like a skittle-ball as best suits their purpose), when they were interrupted by a spectacle which drew all their attention to itself.

CHAPTER VI

A PARTY of armed men advanced across the fields, whom by their wide, long coats, their broad facings, shapeless hats and heavy muskets, by their self-satisfied demeanour and slouching gait, they at once recognised as a detachment of militia from the neighbouring commune. As the troop approached the men saluted, deposited their guns by the great oak-tree and settled comfortably on the ground for a quiet pipe of tobacco. Our friends entered into conversation with the sergeant and learned that he had been sent by the police to receive here on the frontier a couple of young people who had run away and been arrested by warrant at the next town. The oak which had stirred such poetic thoughts in Wilhelm was in effect a boundary-tree. Here they were to remain and await the arrival of the captured pair. Wilhelm was startled by this intelligence, but yet more surprised to hear that the young man was a comedian, and the girl the daughter of a respectable man in the neighbouring small town. From the sergeant's prolix narrative they managed to elicit that some six months earlier a troupe of actors had stayed there, but could not long support itself. When it at last disbanded, one actor remained

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

behind, not wishing to go further, and being willing to teach young people French and dancing for small fees, had found a few patrons and supporters. In the house of Mr. A., where he boarded, he had made acquaintance with his daughter by a previous marriage, to whom his second wife did not pay much heed. With her he often walked out, and gave her elocution lessons in the garden, whereat the neighbours had already begun to talk. This gave rise to some lively scenes in the house, and one morning early they were both missing. The parents ran at once to the police-station, the neighbouring authorities were advised, and, sure enough, the young folks had been arrested there, and were now to be handed over to them.

Our friends were much surprised by the story, being struck by the similarity of fortune, merely reversing the sexes, and they felt curious to see this ill-matched pair. It was not long, too, before the magistrate's clerk himself arrived on horseback, conversed with his troop and, in response to the questions of our company, confirmed the story with sundry further details.

At last a wagon could be seen approaching in the distance surrounded by a civic guard far more laughable than terrible to look at. A misshapen official rode in front, who, with great conscientiousness and wonderful gestures, exchanged compliments with the clerk under the oak by the boundary stone, just as, perhaps, a ghost and magician might do, the one within, the other without the circle, in performing some perilous nocturnal operation. Meanwhile, the attention of the onlookers was riveted upon the wagon. The old coach in which at first they transported the fair lady having broken down on the road, a peasant wagon had been requisitioned as makeshift. She therefore begged for the company of her friend, who, to mark their singular idea of the criminality of the case, at first walked beside her heavily laden with chains. Consequently they now sat side by side upon some bundles of straw, looking tenderly the while at each other, while he kissed her hands with much clatter of the clanking chains.

"We are most unhappy," he cried to the company

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

which had drawn near to the wagon, "but are not so guilty as we seem. This is how cruel men reward true love, and parents, who altogether neglect the welfare of their children, pluck them with violence from those arms of joy which, after long days of misery, they have at last attained."

The questions addressed to them by the assembly were somewhat more prosaic. By the time they were answered the two legal lights had concluded their ceremonies, the wagon passed on, and Wilhelm, whom the fate of the lovers greatly interested, begged his married companions to accompany him to the court-house about half an hour distant. Excusing themselves on the ground that evening was drawing on, they returned to the city, while he hurried after his lovers. Thinking to renew an ancient acquaintance with the judiciary before their arrival, he struck into a footpath, and thus reached the court-house in good time, where he found all in movement and ready for the reception of the fugitives.

The magistrate's clerk, who arrived soon after, related with great joy how everything had gone well, and that the young people were now not far from the place. With increased satisfaction he added that he had ordered the wagon not to drive through the town-gate, but to discharge at the garden which communicated with the court-house by a small gate, so that his prisoners could be quietly introduced.

Although Wilhelm disliked the dull and unfeeling manner in which the man treated the matter, yet he could not refrain from praising him for the forethought thus exercised so as to spare the feelings of the unhappy couple. He accepted the compliment with complacency, although in his heart he really rejoiced only over the trick he had served the burghers assembled in the streets and before the court-house, thus defrauding them of so choice a spectacle as the humiliation of a girl who had carried her head a little bit higher than others. He thereupon began telling the judiciary how well his horse could go, which only yesterday he had bartered from a Jew, and entered

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

upon a long-winded eulogy of its excellencies, whereby Wilhelm was hindered from gathering further information on the case. He could not help secretly wondering how, in expectation of important events and in the midst of serious official duties, anyone could introduce with interest such foreign, indifferent, and he would almost have liked to add, silly matters.

Their arrival was announced. The magistrate had no special fondness for uncommon cases of this sort, seeing that in their treatment he generally made this or the other blunder, and with the best intentions, was usually rewarded by the provincial government with severe reprimand. He therefore passed with heavy steps into his office, whither Wilhelm, the clerk and some of the more respectable burghers followed him, being mostly attracted by curiosity.

The lady was first introduced. She advanced deliberately, without effrontery, and with perfect self-possession. The mode in which she had rearranged her dress, which during her flight and captivity had not presented the most favourable effect, showed Wilhelm that she was a girl who held a good opinion of herself. Without waiting to be questioned she not unbecomingly began to speak.

The clerk commanded her to be silent, and bent, pen in hand, over his folded papers. The magistrate plucked up courage, looked at him, hemmed several times and then asked the poor girl what was her name and how old she was.

"Pardon me, Sir," she answered, "it seems very strange that you should ask after my name and age when you know well who I am, and that I am just the same age as your eldest son. What you want to know of me, and what you ought to know, I will tell without waste of words.

"Since my father's second marriage I have not been particularly well used at home. I might have made several suitable matches, had not my stepmother thwarted them to save the cost of my trousseau. At length, having learned to know young Melina, I could not help loving him, and as we foresaw the obstacles to our union, we resolved

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

to seek together in the wide world that happiness which was denied us at home.

"I took nothing away with me that was not my own, indeed I am still entitled to a handsome portion from my mother. We did not escape like a pair of thieves and robbers, and my lover does not deserve to be dragged about in chains and handcuffs. Our Prince is a just man and will not approve this harshness. If we deserve punishment, it is not such as you have inflicted."

The old magistrate was hereupon doubly and trebly embarrassed. Already the reprimand of his gracious lord had buzzed about his head, and the girl's fluent address now quite upset the plan of his protocol. The evil grew worse when she refused to answer further formal questions, steadfastly appealing to her statements already made.

"I am no criminal," she said, "yet I have been shamefully transported here on a bundle of straw. There is a higher court of justice which will redeem our honour."

The clerk, who had meanwhile been noting down her words, now whispered to the magistrate to proceed with his questions, as a formal protocol could be drafted later.

The old man again took courage and began with frigid words and in the driest of legal phraseology to enquire into the sweet secrets of love.

Wilhelm felt the blood rise to his face, while the cheeks of the pretty culprit were dyed with the bewitching tinge of modesty. She stood silent and confused, until at last embarrassment lent her courage.

"You may rest assured," she exclaimed, "that I shall be strong enough to confess the truth, even though I must testify against myself. Why should I pause and hesitate, since the truth does me honour? Yes, from the very moment I was assured of his love and fidelity I regarded him as my husband. I have willingly yielded him all that love demands, and which a confiding heart cannot withhold. Do with me therefore what you will. If for a moment I hesitated to confess it, my fear lest I might thereby injure him was the reason."

On hearing this Wilhelm formed at once a high opinion

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

of the girl's sentiments ; whereas the legal personages looked upon her as an impudent wench, and the listening burghers thanked God that nothing of the sort had happened in their families, or at least become known.

Wilhelm pictured to Mariana himself as standing at this moment before the seat of judgement, put yet more touching words into her mouth, and made her uprightness appear even more tender, her confession yet nobler. A passionate desire to help these lovers mastered his heart. Making no attempt to conceal it, he secretly begged the wavering magistrate to make an end of the matter, for everything was as clear as possible and needed no further formalities.

This helped, at least so far that the girl was put back, and the young man brought forward, after being relieved at the door of his fetters. This prisoner seemed more perturbed about his fate. His answers were more regular and precise, and if on the one hand he displayed less heroic generosity, yet on the other he commended himself to Wilhelm by the greater tenderness which pervaded his speech.

This enquiry agreed in everything with the foregoing, except that he, to shield the girl, obstinately denied what she had confessed, and on its conclusion she was again brought forward. And now a scene ensued between the two which entirely won them the heart of our friend.

Here, in a disagreeable court-room before his very eyes, he beheld that which is supposed only to occur in comedy or romance ; a conflict of mutual generosity, the strength of love in misery.

"Can it then be true," said he to himself, "that bashful tenderness, which timidly hides from the eye of the sun and of man, and only ventures to enjoy in lonely solitude and profoundest secrecy, yet when dragged forth by some malignant chance, reveals itself as bolder, stronger and more heroic than other impetuous and more boastful passions ?" In his heart he envied their happiness, and his loss of Mariana revived within his soul. If by such

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

means he could have retained her, how gladly he would have changed places with these two lovers, and yielded himself to an unsympathetic justice !

By his intervention the whole affair was quickly terminated. He arranged that they should both be kept in tolerable confinement, and, had it only been possible, would have transported the lovers that same evening to their parents. For he had fully determined to act the mediator here and to promote the happy and decorous union of the two lovers. He dispatched a message to his brother-in-law that he would remain away for this night and the following day. Thereupon he hastened, with the magistrate's permission, to the small room in which the young man was held under restraint.

CHAPTER VII

EVEN during the trial the thought had arisen in Wilhelm's mind that he had previously seen the young male prisoner in some other place. The face seemed familiar, but his demeanour strange ; and he could not recollect the name Melina. As the warder opened the door of the cell, he entered and looked the stranger fixedly in the face, when, as though struck by an instantaneous inspiration, he exclaimed : " Ah, Mr. Pfefferkuchen, is it you whom I meet again ? And is it possible that for a whole half-hour I never recognised you ? "

" And are you the same," responded the other, " with whom I had the pleasure of spending an agreeable evening along with a few comrades and our delightful Mariana ? Perhaps the altered fashion of my hair, another costume and a fresh name misled you."

Wilhelm was startled, and scarcely knew to which of the three, or whether to them all, he should attribute his blindness.

If we may venture to make a surmise, it lay in the fact that the Pfefferkuchen whom he recognised was really

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

a short, stumpy, narrow-chested man without any of the grace of aristocracy either in movement or bearing. His character was as common as his name, and beyond a powerful voice and a certain impetuosity with which he played passionate parts he had nothing in the least to distinguish him. And this was the image which had lingered in Wilhelm's mind. But the Melina, on the contrary, whom he met in chains, whom he saw before the seat of judgement, had been translated by his condition into a tranquil melancholy; he stirred others because he was himself stirred, and his steadfast demeanour on the summit of danger elevated his being for a moment and diffused an aspect of nobility over his entire person.

"How did you come to bear this strange name?" inquired Wilhelm.

"It is not so far removed from the other," replied he. "Names have a great influence upon the imagination of men. Mine provoked raillery, and was distasteful to me. As in many places they say 'Honigkuchen' * instead of 'Pfefferkuchen,' I translated it into Melina as soon as I could get a chance of appearing for the first time in a strange town."

"I doubt if anybody will ever discover its etymology," replied Wilhelm.

Melina (to whom we will not begrudge his name) now began to relate his whole history to Wilhelm, who burned with desire to hear something further of Mariana, concerning whom, as soon as he could decently do so, he launched sundry modest questions.

"Our troupe lost a great deal in her," said the other.

"What? did she go away?" asked Wilhelm.

"Yes," responded the other, "and in a very unpleasant fashion. When we quitted the town of M—— we took our way to the fair at ——. Mariana had latterly been very sad, and thus continued also in the carriage, where I sat for several stages beside her. She seemed quite indifferent to the customary disputes which arise during the cumbersome transport of a company. She submitted

* "Honey-cake," instead of "Pepper-cake."

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

to anything, never joked or sang as aforetime, and such laughable mishaps as befell one and another could win no friendly notice from her. She was often abused for this, but our remarks never seemed to cause her either uneasiness or distress, so that we could not understand her at all. But suddenly at ——, where we lodged for the night, we heard a violent dispute between her and the manager. As we afterwards learned, the latter had received from the town to which we were bound a letter from the relatives of a young man with whom she had had some connection. The letter was threatening and humiliating both for herself and the manager, who came to high words with her about it, so that she finally decided to leave the company. And indeed she went no further, but remained behind in the inn which we left. As it was evident from the letter that our old theatre tailoress had known of the affair, the manager made this an excuse for dismissing her also, having long wished to be rid of her. The two women, therefore, remained alone, and many of the company pitied them. I have often made enquiry about her since, but could never learn anything further."

Wilhelm became so thoughtful over this story that for a long time he paid no attention while Melina reverted to his own history, enlarging upon what had already befallen him, and especially declaring his ideas for the future. Silent and absorbed, Wilhelm stood staring before him, an attitude which the other explained as thoughtful attention. How startled was he then, when at last Wilhelm in response to his question: "Do you believe then that I do well, and that I shall succeed better in this profession?" suddenly looked up and, without reflection, answered:

"Oh, yes! I am persuaded you could choose no better, and that your wife, so far as I know her, will make a career for herself on the stage. She has an agreeable figure, good deportment, a pleasant voice and sufficient youth to make her way in a new profession."

Our friend could not imagine any other solution than that the actor and his young wife would return to the theatre.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

It seemed to him as natural and necessary as that a frog should seek the water. Not for a moment had he doubted it, but rather believed that what his own soul said to him during his absence of mind, he had also heard from the other whereas the latter had spoken in quite a contrary sense, and therefore replied in a tone of some wonder :

"My dear Sir, you cannot have understood me, for I have determined never again to return to the theatre, but rather to seek some civil employment, no matter what it be, so long as I can maintain myself."

"There you do very wrong," responded Wilhelm, "for it is never advisable to change a calling once adopted without very special reasons. Besides, I know of none which can offer you so many attractions as the life of an actor."

"One can see that you have never been one," replied the other.

Whereupon Wilhelm observed : "How rarely is any man content with the condition in which he is ; he always covets that of his neighbour, from which the other is just as anxious to escape."

"And yet there is a difference," replied Melina, "between the bad and the worse. Experience, and not impatience, leads me to this decision. Is there a more miserable, uncertain or toilsome calling in all the world ? I should do almost as well to beg my bread from door to door. What must one not endure from the envy of one's fellow actors, from the partiality of the manager and the evil humours of the public ! Truly a man must have a skin like a bear, which is led about on a chain, in a company of apes and dogs, and beaten that it may dance before children and rabble to the sound of a bagpipe."

Wilhelm thought many things in himself which he did not care to say to the young fellow's face. He therefore talked round him, as it were, and from a distance. The other unbosomed himself so much the more frankly and fully.

"Isn't the manager compelled," said he, "to cast himself at the feet of every town-council just for the mere permission to remain four weeks between the fairs, in

order to set a few extra groschen circulating in the place ! * I have often had to pity ours—otherwise a very decent fellow—though at other times he has given me plentiful reason for dissatisfaction. A good actor is always asking for more wages, and a bad one he cannot get rid of ; and if he wishes to bring his receipts into reasonable proportion to his outgoings, at once he is too dear for the public. The house is empty, and if he would not go altogether to ruin, he is obliged to play with loss and vexation, No, my good Sir, if, as you say, you wish to assist us, I beg you to speak urgently to my lover's parents ! Let them provide for me here ; let them find me a post with some small attorney or tax-gatherer, and I will consider myself fortunate."

After exchanging a few more words Wilhelm took his departure, promising early next morning to visit the parents and see what he could arrange. Scarcely was he alone when he broke out into the following soliloquy : " Unfortunate Melina, whose name should for ever be Pfefferkuchen, not in your condition, but in yourself lies the wretchedness which you cannot control ! What man is there in the world who, adopting without inward vocation any handicraft, art or calling whatsoever, would not, like you, find his position unbearable ? But the man who *with* one talent is born *to* one talent finds therein his fairest existence ! Nothing on earth is without its difficulties ; but an inborn impulse, delight and love help us to overcome obstacles, to break for ourselves a pathway, and uplift our lives above the narrow circle in which others painfully wear themselves out. For you the boards are nothing but boards, and your part like his task to the schoolboy, while you look upon the audience as on work-days they seem to themselves. To you, therefore, it might appear quite the same to sit behind a desk, bending over ruled books and entering up the dues paid in by hungry vassals. You are incapable of feeling that consuming and

* Groschen and Thalers are the coins most frequently referred to in this work. The old Prussian Thaler was worth about three shillings, and contained thirty groschen.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

harmonious whole, which can alone be discovered, comprehended and executed by the spirit ; you cannot feel that in man there dwells a better spark, which, if it receive no nourishment, if it be not fanned, becomes ever more deeply buried beneath the ashes of daily needs and indifference, yet which not until late, indeed hardly ever, is wholly extinguished. You are conscious of no power within your own soul to blow it into flame, nor of any store of wealth within your heart, wherefrom to feed its revived glow. Hunger drives you on, necessity distresses you, discomfort you abhor ; and yet you cannot perceive that these enemies lurk also in every rank of life, and are only to be vanquished by joyousness and steadfast courage. You do well to wish yourself within the safe limits of a commoner station ; for what position, requiring spirit and courage, could you fill ! Endow a soldier, a statesman or a clergyman with your sentiments, and he might with equal reason rail against the paltriness of his condition. Yea, have there not in fact been men so destitute of all humanity and vigour of soul that they have declared the whole life and being of mortal men to be a Negation, a wearisome existence, a cloud of dust ? Were but the images of productive men moving and living in your soul ; did but a sympathetic, quickening fire warm your breast ; were but the impulse which springs from within diffused through your whole being ; were the tones of your throat, the words of your lips pleasant to the ear ; did you but feel that you are sufficient for yourself—then, indeed, you would assuredly seek both place and opportunity to make yourself felt in others.”

Amid such words and meditations our friend had undressed, and he retired to bed with sentiments of inward contentment, concocting for himself a whole romance of what he would do next morning on behalf of this unworthy man. These fancies softly accompanied him over into the realm of sleep, where, greeted with open arms by their sister dreams, refreshed and requickened, our friend's reposing head was circled round by visions of Heaven.

Awakening with early morning he pondered over the

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

coming interview. He soon conquered his slight embarrassment at approaching strangers in so important a matter. On reaching the house his heart beat with disquiet. He modestly stated his errand, and soon found both more and fewer difficulties than he expected. The deed was done ; and although excessively strict and hard people set themselves sternly against what is past and unalterable, thereby generally making the evil worse, yet, as a rule, this fact has an irresistible force upon men's minds, and the impossible which has happened, and which they see before their eyes, takes its place along with ordinary things, as we have already had occasion to remark. It was therefore soon arranged that Mr. Melina should marry the daughter, while she, on the other hand, because of her misconduct, should receive no marriage-portion, and promise moreover to leave her maternal inheritance a few years longer in her father's hands at a low rate of interest. The second point, of finding some civil employment, presented greater difficulties. They did not want to have the imprudent child always before them ; nor did they wish the union of a casual stranger with so respectable a family, which counted indeed a Superintendent among its relations, to be constantly brought to mind by his presence. Nor was there any likelihood that the provincial authorities would entrust him with any office. Both parents were equally opposed, and Wilhelm could do nothing to move them, although he pleaded his cause very earnestly, and this in spite of the fact that in his heart he despised the young man, begrudging him a return to the theatre, and esteeming him unworthy of such luck. Had he only known the secret springs of action, he would not have taken all this trouble ; for the father, who would gladly have retained his daughter, hated the young man, whereas the wife, before he began to court the girl, had herself cast an eye upon him, and could not bear to behold in her step-daughter a successful rival.

I will not dwell more fully upon the release of these two lovers, their reception at home and the end of this

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

story. Enough that, after a few days, and much against his will, Melina with his youthful bride, who displayed much greater desire to see the world and be seen of it, was obliged to depart and seek some place where a company of actors had succeeded in finding subsistence.

CHAPTER VIII

It was now Sunday, and Wilhelm had not yet showed himself at home. His brother-in-law supposed, as was indeed the fact, that he had spent part of the time in making up the family differences, and part in amusing himself. It was a feast-day, and everybody wanted to go for a walk. Father and mother, wife, business employees, servants and maidservants, Werner had permitted all to go out, and himself stayed at home, where he liked to remain. The house was originally built by Wilhelm's grandfather, who had made a good deal of money in the business; but under his father's management it had lost much of its civilian splendour, and this Werner was anxious gradually to restore. He went round to see how much the workmen had accomplished during the week, and what would have to be done during the next. The roof had been entirely restored: several rotten beams replaced by new ones, and fresh boards inserted for such as were decayed or weather-worn. Masons were busy bracing up the bowing walls, and painters in giving them smoothness and appearance. Much had also been done within; all chambers and rooms whitewashed, and instead of the old smoky and dark-coloured wainscots, their walls had been covered with new and bright colours, or with wallpaper. Enough, wherever one went traces were visible of arising life, which afforded hope of prolonged existence. Werner viewed all this with great satisfaction, and seeing that the necessary work would soon be ended, began also to think of what might conduce to pleasure, so that, as the state of his finances permitted, this, too, might be completed.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

In the centre of the house stood a large court paved with sandstone flags, which, since Werner's rule, provided once more an agreeable resort in summer-time. Such objects as previously filled and defaced it had been removed each to its proper place in the stables, coach-house or garrets. Thus cleansed, it served henceforth as the family gathering-place and promenade. At the further end of the same stood an artificial grotto, where formerly a fountain of water had sparkled; but the pipes had become disorganized and many of the ornaments broken off. To restore this to its pristine glory Werner had already ordered mother-o'-pearl shells, corals, galena and whatever appertained to these, and hoped soon to see everything in its former condition, so that on Sundays he might be able to drink a glass of wine and smoke a pipe with his friends beside the leaping water. After planning all this in his mind, he ascended to the upper part of the house, where a balcony had been constructed between two roof-gables. This he found in very bad condition. Here again he speculated of new orange-tubs, bright-coloured flower-pots and exotic plants wherewith to adorn his hanging garden, and thus create for himself a little paradise among the chimney-pots. As evening drew on he descended, visiting on his way the vaults, and giving a look at the sugar-chests, coffee-kegs and logs of indigo, for which, as they meant good business, he felt an especial tenderness. Finally, he settled in the counting-house, opened his trade-books and revelled in their study, for they spoke to him more clearly of profit than the most entertaining literature could have done.

And here it was that Wilhelm suddenly entered, brimful of his adventures and of the lovely country which, in company with sundry acquaintances, he had visited, all of which he retailed with great vivacity to his brother-in-law. The latter gave him audience with his accustomed patience, but was himself this time so full of his own passion that, in reply to Wilhelm's question as to what he had meantime been doing he ^{soon} ended the conversation upon those things which most interested himself.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

"I have just been going through our books," said Werner, "and the great ease with which they permit one to oversee the condition of our fortune leads me afresh to admire the great advantages which the system of book-keeping by double entry affords to the merchant. It is one of the finest inventions of the human intellect, and every good householder should introduce it into his establishment. The order and facility of having everything before one stimulates one's desire to save and acquire ; for just as a man who manages his house badly always feels most at ease in the dark, and would rather not add up the sum of his debts, so, on the other hand, there is nothing more agreeable to a good manager than every day to be able to strike the balance of his growing fortune. Even disaster, though it may painfully surprise, does not alarm him, because he knows at once what kind of acquired profits he may place in the other scale. I am fully persuaded, my dear brother," he continued, "that if you could once win a true taste for our business, you would find that many intellectual capacities can be employed therein with profit and pleasure."

"It is possible," replied Wilhelm, "that I might have acquired some inclination, perhaps even some passion, for trade had it not dismayed me from youth up by displaying its pettiest form."

"You are quite right," responded the other, "and the description of personified trade in a certain youthful poem of which you told me applies admirably to the retail shop-keeping in which you were brought up, but not at all to that larger commerce which you have not yet had a chance of knowing. Believe me, you would find occupation for your fieriest imagination if you would apprehend in spirit the crowds of busy men who traverse the whole world like streams, continually transporting or bringing back. Ever since our mutual interests have been so closely united I have wished that the same might be the case with our endeavours. I could not expect of you to stand in a shop measuring with the yard-stick or weighing out in scales. Let such work in future be carried on as

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

a side-branch by our servants, and you, meanwhile, associate yourself with me, in order, by all kinds of shipping and speculative business, to capture for ourselves a portion of that wealth and well-being which of necessity circulate throughout the world. Cast a glance upon all the natural and artificial products of every continent, see how by turns they have become necessities. How pleasant and ingenious an occupation it is, easily and quickly to procure for each demand whatever for the moment is most wanted, or is lacking, or perhaps hard to find, to store it prudently in stock, and at all times to enjoy the advantage of this immense circulation ! This, I should think, is something which ought to delight every man who has a head. But truly one must first have been made an associate in this guild, which in a place like this you can hardly become. I have long thought over the matter, and under all circumstances it would be of great advantage to you to undertake a journey."

Wilhelm seemed by no means disinclined, and Werner continued : " When once you have seen a couple of great commercial cities and visited a few seaports, you will certainly be carried away with the idea. When you see whence everything comes and whither it goes, you will assuredly feel a pleasure in seeing it pass through your hands. You will then look upon the paltriest wares in their connection with wider commerce, and will therefore hold nothing paltry, since it adds to that circulation from which you derive your subsistence."

Werner, whose sound understanding had been matured by his intercourse with Wilhelm, had accustomed himself to think of his trade and business with a certain elevation of soul, and believed, too, that he did this with more right than his valued and otherwise more intelligent friend, who, as it seemed to him, attached so great a value and the whole weight of his mind to the most unreal things in the world. Sometimes he thought that surely he must succeed, and that this false enthusiasm would be overcome, and so good a fellow brought into the right path. In this hope he proceeded : " The great ones of the world

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

have taken possession of the earth and live in splendour and affluence on its fruits. Every spot of land has been seized, all estates secured, each rank is hardly and scantily paid for the task imposed upon it, and whereby it must live; and where can you find a more lawful pursuit or more equitable conquest than in commerce? If the princes of this world have laid hands on the rivers and roads, and take a handsome toll of all that passes through or near, should we not also with joy seize the occasion, and by our industry also take a toll on sundry articles which, partly through necessity, partly through arrogance, have become indispensable to men? And I can assure you that if you would only employ your poetic fancy, you could boldly present my goddess as an invincible victress over against your own. True, she bears the olive-branch rather than the sword, while dagger and chain she knows not; but crowns she dispenses to her darlings, which—be it said without disdaining the other—are of purest gold from the mine, and glitter with pearls which she has fetched from the depths of the sea by the hands of her ever diligent servants.”

Mild as was this attack, yet it grieved Wilhelm somewhat, but he was too good-natured to retort, and after all was well inclined to suffer each to think the best of his own calling, provided he did not decry that which he himself wished to adopt. He therefore received this apostrophe from Werner, suddenly become fiery, with the same coolness with which the latter had been accustomed to receive his own.

“And what a spectacle it will be for you,” exclaimed Werner, “who take so hearty an interest in human affairs, to behold the good fortune which ever accompanies courageous enterprise being accorded to men before your very eyes! What more delightful sight than a ship arriving after a prosperous voyage, or returning early with a rich catch! Not only relations, acquaintances and partners, but every strange beholder is thrilled when he sees with what joy the imprisoned seamen leap to land before their vessel has touched the quay, feeling themselves once more free and

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

able to entrust to faithful earth what they have robbed from the fickle waters. We live by profit and loss ; but when both only come before us in figures, the one creates a sombre fear, while the other affords no solid inward joy. Fortune is the goddess of living men, and rightly to enjoy her favour we must ourselves live, and also see men who feel themselves fully alive and sentient."

Werner described other similar scenes, which tempted and aroused his friend. He had long felt himself sufficiently cheerful and sound enough in health to undertake something. At home he was not comfortable, and often meditated as to how he could find opportunity to look around in the world and see what might be done and commenced therein. He was therefore well pleased that Werner should speak of a journey, and answered : " If you think money for this outlay is available, and that it would be well expended, I am quite content. Certainly I should be glad to look around me a little, and as you have already travelled a good deal, it would be best for you to draw out a plan, which I will willingly follow."

" You will always find," answered Werner, " enough for your requirements, and, according to my reckoning, your journey ought to bring in money."

" That can certainly not be the case," replied Wilhelm, " unless it be that what I learn is worth the money."

" That is not what I mean," answered the other. " With the greatest ease you may do business on your way which may be profitable to us. I have lately extracted from our books a list of all the debts outstanding to us in various localities. I will draw up the necessary explanations, supply you with the papers, and then, as you go along, you can not only pick up your travelling expenses everywhere, but also remit me something from time to time ; for there are some considerable sums among them, which I do not regard as quite lost."

" Truly no very pleasant occupation," answered Wilhelm, " that of collecting debts !"

" It is only a matter of becoming accustomed to it," said Werner ; " and it is easier to agree with the people

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

than you imagine. I attach great importance to personal presence, for one comes more speedily to a settlement with debtors, and may easily acquire fresh customers; men always require to be driven a bit. We must speak further about this, and you will quickly and gladly enter into my thoughts. Your father will be readily persuaded; indeed the idea was proposed before your illness. When you come back again you will have seen everything, learned to know the people, and will then willingly devote yourself to business at my side. In the larger towns you must look well about you, visit the most interesting factories and buildings, and in the evenings would meet with good company, perhaps also a well-appointed theatre, which indeed I should very much like you to see."

The argument last cited by Werner was that of which Wilhelm had thought first, and furnished the heaviest weight in the scale. The matter, therefore, was quickly arranged, and all things necessary procured and prepared.

THIRD BOOK

CHAPTER I

THE union of a travelling company is a kind of marriage, in which, unhappily, one is often bound, as in the other, more by convenience than harmony, and the consequences of an engagement lightly entered into are in both cases the same. Wilhelm had engaged a hackney coach to a certain place, and in order not to bear the expense alone, sought out three other passengers who were going the same way. Each had his own separate interest, of which he talked exclusively to the rest, hoping to procure thereby some profit for himself. One was a surveyor of mines, another a wine-merchant, and the third and most unselfish found nothing more interesting on the whole way than horses and girls. Wilhelm sat like a dumb man among them, and was particularly annoyed by their unsavoury conversation, their coarse and extravagant demands at the inns, and their constant wrangling with the postilion, who drove not a whit the faster for their abuse.

They halted at noon before a hostelry, where the mining surveyor found a number of his people, whom he had ordered thither, awaiting him among a crowd of peasants.

Any sort of man who wears a uniform can impress the general mass, and usually knows how to realise his advantage. The miners had brought zithers, with which they played and sang, while the rest stood open-mouthed around. Our company pushed its way through, and the singers redoubled their exertions, for now they hoped for a good *pourboire*. After saluting their chief, they commenced to render several pretty songs with harsh but powerful voices. But suddenly, seeing that their play met with approval, they enlarged the circle, and one of their number, advancing with a pickaxe, performed the action of mining, while the rest played a tune. But

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

before long a peasant stepped out from the crowd and indicated with pantomimic threatenings that the other must go away. Our friends were astonished at this, and only recognised the disguised surveyor when he opened his mouth, and in a kind of recitative proceeded to scold the other for daring to dig on his field. But the miner, by no means perturbed, began to teach the countryman that he had a right to do so, and to give him his first idea of mining. The peasant asked all sorts of absurd questions, at which the audience heartily laughed. The miner tried to put him right, and finally demonstrated the advantage which would accrue to him when the subterranean treasures of his land were grubbed out. The peasant, who at first had threatened the other with blows, was gradually appeased, and they parted as good friends after their dispute, from which the surveyor in particular retired with full honours.

When they had finished, each one, and especially Wilhelm, gladly contributed his donation. Dinner was ready, and after they had dined, being now near the mountains and driving but a slow and laborious business, they resolved to continue the journey on foot as far as their night quarters. The postilion described the route, and they soon lost sight of each other, part hurrying on in front, and some lingering behind.

Wilhelm was soon alone. With light footstep he strode through valleys and over mountains, filled with the liveliest sensation of pleasure. For the first time in his life he beheld overhanging rocks, roaring water-brooks, verdure-clad precipices and yawning chasms; and yet his earliest youthful dreams had already hovered round such regions. At the sight he grew young again, every sorrow he had endured was washed out of his soul, and with all the gaiety of youth he recited passages from his earliest dramas, and from other poets, especially from "Pastor Fido," such as, in this lonely place, flocked to his memory in troops. He peopled the world before him with all the forms of antiquity, while every step of the future glowed with the presage of important actions and remarkable events.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

Several people had from time to time interrupted him, though without his paying them any attention. One after the other they overtook him, and with a hasty greeting pursued the mountain path. Finally, one more talkative than the rest joined company with him, and narrated the reason of this numerous pilgrimage. In Hochdorf,* said he—which was the name of the place where our travellers were to stay for the night—a comedy was to be given that same evening, and thither all the neighbourhood was hastening.

“What?” cried Wilhelm, “has dramatic art found a way amid these solitary mountains, these impenetrable forests, and built herself a temple here?”

“You will wonder still more,” said the other, “when you learn by whom it is to be acted. There is a large manufactory of oilcloth in the place, which supports many hands. The proprietor, living, so to speak, far from all human society, could devise no better way of entertaining his artists and workmen in winter than by setting them to act plays. He will not allow cards among them, and wishes to guard them against barbarous habits. Thus they pass the long evenings; and as this is the old man’s birthday, they are holding a festival in his honour.”

On hearing the name of the place and of the factory director, it occurred to Wilhelm that he also was among those on his list from whom he had to collect money. “You come certainly at a very inconvenient time,” said he to himself: “for you will only renew for these people an anxiety which for the moment they have perhaps driven out of their minds.” This reflection quite spoiled the rest of the way for him, and it was not without a secret good-natured unrest that he approached the house. His other travelling companions had already reached the inn, and, attracted by the novelty of the spectacle, had procured entrance, while Wilhelm also was received with great friendliness by the head of the household. On the mention of his name the old man cried in astonishment: “Ah,

* In Chapter III. called Hochstädt.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

Sir ! and so you are the son of the excellent man to whom I owe so many thanks, and am still indebted in some money. Your father has treated me so patiently that I should indeed be a rogue did I not pay him faithfully and honestly. You come just at the right time to prove that this is earnest with me. For a few years past I have had to beg for delay, but now, thank God ! certain old outstandings have come to hand, whereof I have made a division in which your father is not forgotten. I still owe him a hundred ducats ; two hundred thalers are now lying ready, and for the balance he will surely give me credit until next fair." He called his wife, who seemed equally pleased to see the young man, declared that he resembled his father, and expressed regret that, owing to the press of strangers, they could not lodge him for the night. Wilhelm produced his papers and power of attorney, the old man led him into his office and counted out two hundred thalers in gold on the spot. " If things continue like this," thought Wilhelm to himself, " Werner is right, and it is easier than one imagined to get men to fulfil their obligations."

The time now approached when the play should commence. But suddenly someone brought the sad news that the new pastor, who had only been there a few months, had forbidden, or at least proclaimed the performance, saying that he could not allow comedy to be played in his parish until permission had been granted by the authorities. In vain they had urged upon him that the magistrate knew all about it, had often himself been present at their plays, and would certainly raise no objection. Moreover, they could not send there and back under three hours. All was in vain ! He stuck to his text, and the entire company was in the greatest perplexity. Wilhelm undertook to convince him, went to him and delivered a most pathetic address. The cleric was immovable, though the young orator employed every description of argument. In vain ! The other held fast to his opinion, and assured him that he neither could nor would depart from it. The unfortunate ambassador returned full of wrath and annoyance, and the

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

whole company was beside itself with rage. The actors came running up, ready dressed, and stated with much excitement that lamps and lights were all burning, and everything ready for the signal. Folks scolded, they stamped, they ran, they screamed. Just as the noise was at its worst, horses rode up before the door, and the Chief Ranger of the forest dismounted with a few huntsmen. He marvelled much at the confusion in which he found the house, and amid which the marks of honour to which he was accustomed were almost forgotten. As soon as he learned the cause he exclaimed: "The parson won't let you play! Come! Come! I'll speak a word in his ear. We are good friends, and he will certainly do it to please me." And indeed he went to him and speedily returned with permission—let them make a start. Wilhelm greatly desired in his heart to know the arguments with which this cavalier had persuaded the ecclesiastic; for, as he said to himself, he had forgotten nothing which a man of understanding could urge on such an occasion, yet had been unable to convince him.

The company was now conducted to the theatre, which was a barn and adjoined the garden. Everybody admired the internal decoration, which was agreeable, though without any special taste. The painter, who worked in the factory, had formerly been an assistant at the Dresden Theatre. Canvas and paint cost little, and the fun paid for the labour. The play, which was half borrowed from a strolling company, and half fashioned in their own manner, amused the audience, although but poor stuff. An intrigue, in which two lovers first tried to carry off a girl from her guardian, and then from each other, produced all sorts of interesting situations and rendered the action of the piece sufficiently lively. "I perceive," said Wilhelm to himself, "that the ancients were quite right, who maintain that, if only a piece be full of action, it will please and delight, though it be without moral or delineation of character. This, they say, was the beginning of all theatrical plays, and I can almost believe it, since it is the beginning of ours. An uncouth

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

man is satisfied if only he see something happen, while the cultured wish to feel, and reflection is only agreeable to the highly cultured."

His silent meditations were disturbed by the tobacco-smoke, which grew ever stronger and stronger. The Chief Ranger had lighted his pipe soon after the commencement of the play, and gradually others also took the same liberty. But an even more unpleasant diversion was created by this gentleman's large dogs, which, although shut out, had managed to find their way in by a back door. They ran on to the stage, knocked against the actors and by a leap over the orchestra finally took refuge near their master in the pit.

By way of after-piece a congratulatory scene had been provided, in which a bad portrait of the old man was erected on an altar and saluted with respectful gestures. The youngest child stepped forward in her gayest attire and pronounced a speech in verses of very moderate quality, which moved the whole family to tears, not even excepting the Chief Ranger, who thereby bethought him of his own children. How potent are local surroundings to influence the hearts of men, and how touching is any solemnity, even though not conceived in the best of taste !

CHAPTER II

AFTER journeying for a few days, the company reached a medium-sized town, where their union terminated, and in which, after sending back the coachman, they could rest and attend each to his own business.

Wilhelm delivered his letters of introduction and, with varying success, demanded payment from several persons on his list. Some paid, a few excused themselves, others took offence, and some denied liability. According to his instructions he was to take legal proceedings against some, and for this purpose had to seek out and instruct a lawyer. This task, as we can well

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

imagine, went much against the grain; but he was conscientious and wished to fulfil it accurately.

The society into which he was drawn pleased him no better. It consisted of people who lived a decent life for six days of the week, took a little extra pleasure on Sunday, and moreover spent every evening over billiards or ombre in private circles! These were the festivities wherewith they entertained him, yet we may say that at least they did their best, and never for a moment doubted that their society was as pleasant to their guest as his to them. It was in the hotel that he found his best amusement, for life there was merry, with all sorts of diversions, which interested him. A large company of rope-dancers, tumblers and jugglers, including also a strong man, had just arrived with a great number of women and children, and while preparing for a public performance, created confusion upon confusion. First they quarrelled with the host, then among themselves, and if their strife was insufferable, their expressions of pleasure were utterly unbearable. On the market-place he already saw an extensive platform erected, swinging-boards attached, posts for a slack-rope secured, while blocks for the tight-rope were being set up. Next morning came a procession through the town, whereby it was to be informed of the spectacle prepared for its delectation. First rode a drummer and the manager on horseback, behind them a female dancer mounted on a similar skeleton and with a child in front of her, gaily bedecked with ribbons and spangles. After these came the rest of the company on foot, two and two, bearing the children in adventurous postures on their shoulders. Palliasso the clown ran merrily up and down among the gathering crowd, distributing his playbills with many a broad joke; here, perhaps, kissing a girl or playfully striking a boy, and thus awakening in the people an invincible desire for closer acquaintance on the coming evening. The printed bills extolled the manifold accomplishments of the company, and especially of a certain Monsieur Narcisse and Mademoiselle Landernette, who, as the chief personages of the play, had both

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

been prudent enough to abstain from the procession, thereby assuming a more dignified position and exciting greater curiosity. As evening approached, Wilhelm was conducted to a house in which a considerable company had assembled, and towards the hour appointed the square filled up with people, and the windows with folks of more importance.

The clown first sought to provoke the audience to attention and good humour with a few foolish sallies such as the spectators are always accustomed to laugh at. Some children excited both wonder, terror and pity by their strange contortions; but much greater was the pleasure when the active vaulters leaped over each other through the air, now one behind the other, then altogether, now backwards or forwards. The whole assembly rang with loud hand-clapping and shouts of approval. Attention was next turned to another diversion: the children had all to walk the rope one after the other, the least skilful first, in order to spin out the time and illustrate the difficulty of the art. Some of the leapers and one adult female performer displayed a certain amount of skill; yet none of these were Monsieur Narcisse or Mademoiselle Landerinette. At last these two issued from a kind of tent draped with red curtains, and by their pleasant figures and elegant adornment fulfilled the hitherto well-nourished hopes of the audience. He was a lightly-built, brisk young fellow of medium height, with black eyes and an immense mass of hair; she not less dainty, but more stoutly built. With easy movement, bold somersaults and singular postures, they danced alternately on a rope. Her lightness and his intrepidity, and the precision with which they executed each evolution heightened the general delight with every fresh step and spring. The dignity wherewith they bore themselves, and the obvious attention paid them by the others seemed to mark them out as lords and masters of the whole troupe, a rank which everyone must admit they deserved. The enthusiasm spread from the crowd to the spectators in the windows; the ladies fixed their eyes

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

on Narcisse and the gentlemen on Landerinette ; the people shouted, while the selecter public could not refrain from clapping, and even laughed at the clown. So great were the joy and enchantment that everybody forgot to slink away when several of the company, armed with tin plates, pressed through the crowd to collect money.

" They've done their business well," remarked Wilhelm to one of his late travelling companions, who sat beside him in the window.

" In part, perhaps," said the other ; " but the girl is a jolly smart lass."

" It was all well done," answered Wilhelm. " I must admire the shrewdness with which the slightest trick was brought in at the right time, and made to fulfil its purpose ; at the way in which, beginning from the simplest—even the awkwardness of the children—they advanced to the most complex artistry of their virtuosi."

His companion did not share this opinion, but maintained that the whole was an unbearably wearisome farrago of trivialities, which it was a waste of time to watch. " They ought to have produced their cleverest tricks right-away, one after the other, so that the whole might have been over in a quarter of an hour."

" And do you believe," retorted Wilhelm, " that either the public or the people themselves would have gained anything by that ? Do we not all ask to be entertained for a while with a certain variety of play, while the actors naturally wish to present their performance in the most favourable light ? "

" It's the old jog-trot method and the custom of the trade. I have seen the same thing with them all."

" Be that as it may," said Wilhelm, " both nature and experience have taught them the best rules, and if, during the few days they remain here, they continue thus to act step-wise, and produce, as I expect, their best performances last, they will make a great impression and collect a lot of money. I wish many an author had the same ingenuity and the same taste."

The stranger, who found no profit in such abstract

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

speeches, began to catalogue Landerinette's personal charms, while Wilhelm analysed her artistic capabilities.

Wilhelm's supposition proved quite correct, for on the second day their art showed a pronounced advance. The preliminaries, if I may so term them, were entirely omitted, yet everything proceeded in the same order as on the first day; they offered a few fresh tricks, more complex and apparently more hazardous; the clown's jokes were the same, yet seemed to grow in effectiveness the more they were repeated. And, as a thoughtful man has remarked: inconvenience without pain, and size without strength are deep sources of the ridiculous, so, we may add, intentional clumsiness and the awkwardness of disguised strength produce a highly comical and agreeable effect.

The enthusiasm for Mr. Narcisse and Mamsell Landerinette gained rapidly in volume. The shouting, clapping and cries of "Bravo!" grew more and more general; purses were opened, and the receipts became considerable. A stranger, sitting in the window, expressed regret that a certain child was no longer with the troupe, for there were some tricks, and especially an egg-dance, which it performed with a skill he had never before seen equalled. As it was now almost night, the artistes quitted their stage and were carried home in triumph by the importunate crowd.

On the third day, when the concourse of men had enormously grown by influx from the surrounding localities, the snow-ball of applause rolled bigger and bigger. The items known as vaulting over a sword, or leaping through a tub with a paper bottom, with all their concomitant details, quite carried the people away. Amid universal awe, terror and amazement the strong man stretched himself out with his head and feet resting on two widely-separated chairs, and permitted an anvil to be placed on his unsupported body, upon which three strapping blacksmiths forged a complete horse-shoe.

A turn known as the "Strength of Hercules," in which a row of men stood on the shoulders of others, and more upon these, until at last they formed a living pyramid,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

crowned as knob or weathercock by a child standing on its head, was something which had never been seen in this region before, and worthily ended the whole spectacle. Mr. Narcisse and Mamsell* Landerinette permitted themselves to be carried in portable chairs on the shoulders of the rest through the principal streets of the town amid the boisterous jubilation of the crowd. People flung them ribbons, wreaths of flowers and silk handkerchiefs, and pressed closely up so as to look them straight in the face. Each seemed happy to have seen them, or to have been favoured with a glance in return.

“What author, what actor, would not be happy to create so universal an impression; how delicious must be the sensation of thus universally disseminating, as by electric shock, good and noble sentiments, worthy of humanity, and of scattering such rapture among the people as by their visible performances these folks have been able to do! Oh, that one could give men—or at least the best among them—a fellow feeling for all that is human, could inflame and agitate them by the presentation of bliss and woe, of wisdom and folly, of nonsense and absurdity, so as to set their sluggish inwards in action! Then perhaps that might happen which the ancient philosopher promised concerning Tragedy: that it should cleanse our passions.” With such thoughts Wilhelm entertained himself as he returned home, after having vainly sought through all the company for a single individual to whom he might confide his reflections.

CHAPTER III

ON reaching his hotel Wilhelm met Mr. Narcisse standing in the entrance, and begged him to come for a moment to his room. He found him to be a good-humoured youth,

* NOTE.—The translator would point out to his readers that the document here reproduced was never corrected by its author for the press, so that it contains several contradictory phrases and irregularities. Such, for instance, are the varying titles given to these two acrobats. He has thought it advisable to adhere in all these details to the original.—G. A. P.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

who related his story with great facility and much flippancy, but who was very far from being the master of the company. On Wilhelm congratulating him on his success, he received his praise somewhat nonchalantly. "We are used," said he, "to people laughing at us and admiring our art, but we are none the better for their most extravagant applause, for the proprietress pays each his fixed wages, whether receipts be good or bad." Wilhelm asked questions on several points, which the other answered fully, then, professing haste, begged to be excused.

"Where are you going in such a hurry, Monsieur Narcisse?" asked Wilhelm. The young man smiled and confessed that his figure and talents had won him an approval which he valued much more highly than mere applause. He had received tender billets from several ladies of the town, and was urgently invited for this evening and also for the night. He continued to retail his adventures with the utmost candour, and would have specified names, streets and houses, had not Wilhelm, shocked by such indiscretion, declined to listen and left him.

Meanwhile his younger travelling companion had entertained Mamsell Landerinette, and at supper gave them pretty plainly to understand with what sort of hopes she had flattered him.

Thus a few days passed away, which Wilhelm spent in collecting various debts, and though he refrained from sharp measures, but rather showed kindness and forbearance, he met with success, so that, including what he obtained at Hochstädt, he gathered nearly fifteen hundred thalers. To inform Werner of this in his next letter, and remit him the greater part of the money afforded him extraordinary satisfaction. He introduced himself also to several tradespeople, who were so pleased with his manners that they gave him orders, which he carefully noted. Finally, he judged it best to continue his journey, and as the former party was scattered, took a postchaise, packed his trunk and departed early, so as to reach the next station before night.

The time passed in diversified meditations; night had

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

already begun to fall, when he noticed that the postilion drove first one way and then another through the wood which they were traversing, and from this fact judged that he had lost the right path. This on enquiry proved to be the case ; but the good fellow asserted they could not be far from the place of their destination. It was far on in the night when they reached a village and enquired their whereabouts. They had wandered a long way from their path, which indeed had been quitted almost at a right angle, so that the station they aimed for, and to which there was no direct route from this place, lay six hours away. Wilhelm demanded therefore that the postilion should remain here overnight and conduct him thither in the morning. But the postilion begged earnestly to be allowed to drive straight back home, saying that he was new to the work, and having already overdriven the horses, had everything to fear from his master. Instead of the present team he would procure him for cheap money the old travelling carriage of the pastor and some farm horses, respecting which he had already made enquiry. These could carry him to the next place, which was a considerable country town, and lay only three hours distant. There he would arrive early in the day, and could take fresh posthorses and thus resume his route without difficulty. The landlord added also his persuasions, and, being good-natured, Wilhelm gave consent.

Next morning, as his new driver brought him near the town, and he saw it lying before him, he learned from the man that there was a strong garrison there, and that he would be sharply examined at the gates. "It always seems strange to me," said Wilhelm to himself, "when mentioning my name, to call myself Meister ('Master'). I should do better to announce myself as Geselle ('Journeyman Apprentice'), for I fear greatly I shall long remain in the ranks of apprentices. I will do it at any rate by way of joke, for I know nobody and have no one to call on here. The name is not euphonious, but significant ; it would sound better translated, but let us stick to our mother-tongue !" He passed under the gate, and was thus

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

inscribed. It was still early as he drew up in front of the hotel. The host informed him that most of his rooms had been taken by a company of comedians who were in the town; but that he would find him a very nice little room opening upon the garden. "Must then my fate," cried Wilhelm secretly to himself, "always bring me up against these people, with whom I neither have nor desire anything in common!" He answered the host that he did not require a room, but would merely descend for a moment, and then order posthorses for his further journey.

Yesterday's playbill was still affixed to the doorpost, and to his great amazement he found the names of Mr. and Mrs. Melina upon it. "I must at least say 'Good morning' to them," thought he, just as a young creature came springing down the stairs and attracted his attention. A short vest with slashed Spanish sleeves and wide trousers became the child very prettily, which had also long black hair, wound in curls and plaits around its head. He looked sharply at it, and could not at first be sure whether to take it for a boy or a girl, but finally deciding for the latter, saluted the apparition with a "Good morning!" and enquired if Mr. and Mrs. Melina were already risen. She turned a black, sharp side-glance upon him, and ran past him into the kitchen without answering. He sent the host upstairs and entered the room door immediately behind him.

CHAPTER IV

As he stepped into the room Madame cast a white mantle around her to hide her night attire, while her husband drew up his stockings and removed the night-cap from his head. They wished to clear a chair to offer the new arrival a seat, but neither table, bed, nor even the stove or window-cornice could hold anything more. They were delighted to meet again, and Madame Melina especially did not hide her desire to win Wilhelm's good opinion, making some pretensions to wit, poetry and whatever else belong thereto. Formerly, during her somewhat

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

prolonged spinsterhood, she had been the oracle of her little town, and the assumption with which she now showed herself to Wilhelm revealed her by no means in so favourable a light as when surrounded by a halo of misfortune. Her endeavours left Wilhelm quite cold, or rather he did not notice them at all. They both launched into complaints against the directress, for it was a woman who held this company together, whom they abused as a bad manager, who saved nothing in good times, but rather squandered everything upon one of the party whom she had chosen as a favourite, so that when bad weeks supervened she was driven to the pawnshop, and even then could not pay her actors what she had promised. In fact it was thought she had yet other debts, that her affairs did not stand at all well, so that one must look ahead.

During the conversation Wilhelm recollected the singular figure that had met him, and asked who it was. "We cannot tell ourselves," replied Madame Melina, "what to make of the child. Some four weeks since there was a troupe of rope-dancers here, which exhibited some very clever tricks. Among the rest was this child, a girl, who did all her turns very well, and especially the fandango, which she danced with exceptional grace, and performed several other tricks of art with much skill and address. But she was always silent when spoken to, alike when praised or questioned. One day, shortly before their departure, we heard a dreadful noise in the lower part of the house. The master of this troupe was violently scolding the child, whom he had flung out of the room, and she stood motionless in a corner of the hall. He fiercely demanded something from her, which she, as we could hear, refused to do. Thereupon he fetched a whip and fell mercilessly upon the child, which never winced, or hardly changed a feature, until at last, moved with pity, we ran downstairs and interfered. The infuriated man then turned his abuse on us and continued to strike, until finally, on our stopping him, he poured out his anger in an overwhelming torrent of words. He screamed, he stamped, he foamed, and, from what we could understand,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

the child had refused to dance, and neither entreaties nor violence could move her. It was her turn to walk the rope, and she wouldn't do it, while many hundreds of people had run together to witness an advertised egg-dance—they were shouting for it; but all in vain. The proprietor was furious, for the audience was breaking up in indignation, and made this an excuse for not paying. 'I'll strike you dead!' he screamed. 'I'll leave you lying in the street; you may die on a dunghill, for you shall never have another bite from me!' Our manageress, who stood by, had long had her eye on the child, because the girl who formerly played Fiamette in 'The Governess' had been lured away from us, and we also lacked a chambermaid, for which post she thought the girl would be suitable. She therefore at once tackled the enraged man with her usual artfulness, trying to persuade him that the best thing he could do would be to give the child away. And she gained her object, too; for in his first heat he parted with the creature on the sole condition that he be paid a certain sum for its clothes, which, to be sure, he fixed pretty high. Madame de Retti lost no time, but paid the money on the spot, and took the child to her room. Before the hour was over the rope-dancer rued his bargain, and demanded the child back. But our chieftess defended herself right valiantly, and threatened that if he insisted for a moment she would accuse him of cruelty to the child before the chief magistrate, who was a very just and severe man, and would certainly not let him off with a whole skin. In this way she managed to frighten him, and the child remained ours. But we have since regretted a hundred times that we interested ourselves for the creature. She is not the least manner of use to us. She can learn very quickly by heart, but acts miserably. We can get nothing out of her. She is ever ready to oblige, but will never do just what we want, though we may flog her a hundred times. The first morning after she had slept with us she came out in the boy's clothes in which you saw her, and no one has ever since been able to persuade her to lay them aside. When

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

our directress asked her, half in jest and half in earnest, how she intended to repay the money paid for her, she answered : ' I will serve you,' and from that time on has yielded every service unasked, even the most menial, to the directress and the whole company with a speed, accuracy and goodwill which have gone far to reconcile us to her obstinate disposition and lack of talent for the theatre." Wilhelm asked to see her more nearly, and Melina went to fetch her. " You never thanked the gentleman this morning," said Mrs. Melina, as the child entered. She remained standing by the door, as though she wanted to slip out again, laid her right hand upon her breast, the left upon her forehead, and bowed deeply. " Come hither, my dear little one," said Wilhelm. She cast an uncertain glance upon him and approached.

" What is your name ? " said he. " They call me Mignon," answered she. " How old are you ? " " No one has ever counted my years." " Who was your father ? " " The great devil is dead." These last words they explained by telling him that a certain acrobat, who had recently died, and whom they called " the great devil," had passed for her father. She gave her answers in broken German and with an air which quite bewildered Wilhelm, laying each time her hands on breast and head and profoundly bowing.

" What do these gestures mean ? " said Mrs. Melina. " This is again something fresh ; every day she has some new singularity." She was silent, and Wilhelm could not take his eyes from her. He felt both eyes and heart irresistibly drawn towards the mysterious condition of this creature. Her age he estimated at twelve or thirteen. Her body was well built, except that her ankles and joints promised either a stronger growth, or indicated one that had been retarded. Her features were not regular, but striking ; her forehead proclaimed a mystery, her nose was exceptionally beautiful, and her mouth, though somewhat inclined to pout and occasionally to twitch, was ingenuous and charming. Her complexion was brunette, with a touch of red in the cheeks, which had suffered much

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

from rouge, which she only applied with the utmost unwillingness. Wilhelm continued to gaze upon her, and forgot his surroundings in the contemplation. Mrs. Melina awakened him by giving a sign to the child, which, after bowing as above described, sprang like lightning through the door.

Wilhelm could not banish her form from his mind. He would gladly have continued asking questions and hearing about her, but Mrs. Melina thought they had heard enough and turned the conversation to her own talent, play and fortune.

CHAPTER V

IT was soon decided that Wilhelm should remain for the day, make acquaintance with the directress and other members of the company, and be present this evening at the play. To-morrow early he might continue his journey. The temptation was too great for him to resist long, although at first he raised certain difficulties ; for he had promised Werner to be in a certain town on a specified day. This date was now approaching ; he had stayed longer in the last place than was intended, and had since been further delayed by the postilion's mistake. Having always been accustomed to obedience and order, he held both duty and promise as sacred, and only valued himself in so far as he fulfilled them. But his inclination overcame everything, and he remained with the fixed intention of setting out early next morning. Madame Melina invited him to dinner, while he asked her and her husband to his room, where he ordered a meal. On the host enquiring his name, which he would have to give at nightfall to the Commandant,* he gave the same as he had inscribed at the gate, and begged his friends to address him thus and to conceal his true name. At table they grew very merry. Madame did her utmost to please, her husband made now and then a dry jest, and Wilhelm, who for the first time in many weeks felt his heart free from care, grew frank and

* In accordance with police regulations.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

vivacious, and chatted of his projects with much fire. They heartily enjoyed the wine, which, for a wonder, was good, and forgot to break up.

Madame Melina was not without intelligence of a sort, only her mind and wit had not been cultivated. She sometimes found that which was good, though she often fell from the extravagant to the vulgar. The epoch of her first and best culture had fallen in the time of the "Bremisch Contributions," she had taken their part against Gottsched, but for the most part had stopped at this point, except that Lessing's plays, which occasionally appeared at the theatre, had later given her mind another direction. During her unmarried state she had not been unsuccessful in occasional poems and madrigals, and had written and declaimed a few prologues for the company with much applause. She now recited one or two of these to her host, who praised whatever was praiseworthy in them. She knew no foreign language, nor anything of foreign literature, so that her range was somewhat narrow. It may have been much narrower still, and Wilhelm in his innocence might have taken her for a comprehensive genius, for she was that which I would describe with one word, a 'sympathiser.' She knew how to flatter with peculiar attentions anyone whose esteem she wished to win, to enter as far as possible into his ideas, and when these soared above her horizon, to greet with ecstasy the appearance of so great a novelty. She understood how to ask questions or keep silence, and though not at all spiteful, could observe with great care the weak points in others. If we add to this that, although no longer young, she was well-conserved, had friendly eyes and a pretty mouth, when she did not distort it, one can well understand that our hero thoroughly enjoyed himself in her company.

The hour for the theatre drew near before they had spoken with the directress. The play was Holberg's "Bramarbas." Madame Melina grumbled at the rôle of Leonore, and at the dull insipidity of the piece, in which, nevertheless, the public found great delight. They parted, and Wilhelm repaired to the tent. He soon

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

found the actors to be such as he was accustomed to see, mostly people who had joined in playing extemporised comedy, who, having become used to a certain individual step, were so satisfied with it that they regarded this play also as a scenario, to which by additions and buffoonery they might give a yet broader form than it by nature possessed. Leonore, on entering, was so kind as to seek out our friend with her eyes, and to employ and apply to the best of her ability some of the wise lessons concerning declamation and action which he had imparted at table. This pleased him well, and though she seldom appeared, yet, as usual, he forgot all the others, praised her highly, and on their way home made observations on her acting, and assured her that, if only she paid attention to herself and her art, she might rise high in the profession. This discourse was continued in her room, whither Wilhelm accompanied her; again they forgot to visit the directress as proposed, and no one noticed how late it had become until Mr. Melina entered the room.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "how happy I should be if I could partake of your instruction! How much happier if you could see me act all my parts! Ah, if I could only learn how to play them from you!"

Wilhelm expressed regret; they urged him to give them the next day also, on which there was to be no play, but only an early-morning rehearsal, at which he might make the acquaintance of Madame de Retti, and they would have a pleasant day together afterwards. The married couple were so urgent, and she in particular pleaded so prettily, so half-confidingly, and at last regarded it as so impossible that they should part, that he also felt it impossible and promised to stay.

On returning to his room and examining his things, he missed the large leather letter-case in which he carried all documents and papers necessary for his business. At first he was alarmed, but soon recollected that he had left it behind with a friend in the last place at which he stayed. A few other things also had been left there, which he had requested might be sent after him when he

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

announced his arrival in a certain town. He soon composed himself therefore, and thought that all might as well come together, and that the delay could not be very great.

Rising early next morning, he found the whole house, still, and only Mignon moving in the passages. He made friendly advances, spoke to the child and asked several questions. She looked sharply into his face, but answered no questions and evinced not the slightest emotion or inclination for him. She seemed quite without feeling. At last he put his hand in his pocket and handed her a piece of money. The little creature's features grew brighter, but she seemed to doubt, and hesitated to take it. At last, seeing that he was serious, she hastily snatched it and examined the gift in her hands with visible delight. He afterwards expressed to Mrs. Melina his astonishment at the child's great delight in the coin. "I can explain this phenomenon," said she. "Shortly after the directress secured this singular being from the rope-dancer, she said one day to it: 'Now you are mine, see that you behave!' 'Yes, I am yours,' answered Mignon, 'for I saw that you bought me; how much have you given?' Whereon the directress replied in jest: 'A hundred ducats; when you have repaid them you shall be free and may go where you like.' Ever since then we notice that she collects money, we sometimes give her pfennige, and she has given me a big bag of copper-money to keep for her, which we suspect she is saving for her ransom, for she recently asked me how many pfennige go to a ducat."*

CHAPTER VI

At ten o'clock Wilhelm wended his way to the theatre, where the whole company gathered around him. He looked about to see if there were a face that attracted him, and fancied he found sympathy now in this glance,

* The pfennig was the twelfth part of a groschen, or about a tenth of a penny. The ducats here mentioned were probably worth about 16s.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

now in that. Madame de Retti, entering soon after, quickly drew all his attention to herself. Her whole appearance was masculine, her gait and behaviour haughty, though without being offensive. The others stood around her like courtiers. She greeted the stranger with kindness and respect. During rehearsal she seated herself near the new arrival, to entertain him with theatrical matters. Yet her attention the while was never diverted from the acting of the players. Here she would encourage one with a joke, while with others she was less lenient. Those who were novices in the art she corrected, and to the self-conceited spoke an instructive word, yet so as neither to offend nor put to shame. To Wilhelm she quietly expressed sorrow that so few actors are in earnest, and especially that one cannot get them to treat rehearsals as of importance. Our friend listened very gladly to her opinions on this subject because they were his own.

"An actor," said he, "ought to be solicitous above everything to learn his part thoroughly. Even for the first rehearsal he should know his rôle by heart, and thenceforth study the various *nuances* of which it is capable. His exits and entries, his resting and standing, all that he does or allows to be done and every attitude must be diversely thought out in repeated rehearsals, so that during the performance itself he can yield himself up entirely to his heart, his mood or to luck. In this way his acting will acquire a diversity which will make the play seem new even to one who sees it performed several times. How differently a singer can express a single sustained note or a single passage, without departing from the character of the air, if only he have method and know how to alternate expression with good taste. It is just the same with the parts in a play, in which a narrow-spirited actor beholds only chains and bonds, where a wise and skilful player sees a free course."

Madame de Retti was enchanted to hear from the mouth of a third person those wise precepts which she had so often, and mostly in vain, preached to her actors. Their conversation grew more lively, and Wilhelm was

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

quite enraptured by her great theatrical insight. They quite forgot the rehearsing company, much to Madame Melina's annoyance, for she was among them and saw her friend's attention being diverted from herself. Wilhelm, on the contrary, was quite in his element, and for almost the first time in his life in converse respecting his darling theme with someone far more familiar with it than himself, and who was able from experience to confirm, expand and correct that which he had thought out in his own quiet corner. How pleased he felt when he concurred with her; how attentive when something new was propounded; and how careful in question and analysis when she did not share his opinion! She referred during their discussion to several plays which he must see presented by her and her company.

This time his doubts were more swiftly scattered than yesterday, he promised to remain a few days longer, and reflected with himself that in any case his journey was not arbitrary, and that a week more or less would not do much harm to the debts he had to collect, some of which were already years old. He gave himself up therefore entirely to his predilection, and first one week and then another slipped away in the society of both women, in discourse, reading and recitation, in visiting the playhouse, and in discussions thereupon, and, before he noticed it, they were gone.

Before yielding himself up to any new passion a man pauses for a moment as before a strange element. Yet scarce has he yielded, than, like a swimmer in the water, he is agreeably embraced and borne along, finds himself very comfortable in his new conditions, and never thinks of firm ground until his strength fails, or cramp threatens to drag him beneath the waves.

Moreover Mignon's form and being fascinated him ever more and more. The child had something singular in all she did or endured. She never walked up or down stairs, but leaped or mounted by the banisters, and skipped through the corridors before one was aware of her, then sat above on the wardrobe and remained quite still for a while. Wilhelm also noticed that she had a special form of saluta-

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

tion for each, and for some days now had always greeted him with both arms crossed over her breast. On many days she answered his various questions more freely, but always strangely ; yet it was impossible to decide whether this were wit or lack of expression, for she spoke an extremely broken German, interwoven with French and Italian. In the performance of her duties she was indefatigable, up with the rising sun ; though at night she disappeared early. Not till later did Wilhelm discover that she slept every night in a garret chamber on the bare ground, and that nothing could induce her to lie on a bed or bag of straw. He often found her washing herself, and her clothing was always clean, though nearly everything about her was doubly and trebly patched.

He was told also that she went to mass very early every morning, and once, on returning from a very early walk, he entered the church when passing, and found her in a corner near the church door, kneeling with her rosary and most devoutly praying. She did not observe him, and he returned home, puzzled with a thousand thoughts concerning this strange figure, but unable to come to any definite conclusion.

CHAPTER VII

As they all lived together in one house and had opportunities of seeing each other at all hours, they soon became more familiar. The two women took Wilhelm in their midst, both sought to attract him, for each found him agreeable, while the fact that he had money and was not stingy with it added greatly to his attractiveness. Without the smallest intermingling of tenderness in his sentiments, he found himself very much at his ease between the two women. Madame de Retti widened his spirit and enlarged his knowledge while discoursing to him of her own talents, enterprises and fortunes, Madame Melina

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

attracted him while seeking to learn from him and to form herself after his pattern. The former imperceptibly gained an influence over him by her decided and masterful character ; the other by her complaisant and yielding temper, so that he soon depended entirely upon both their wills and found the society of both highly necessary. It was not long before they grew still more intimate and confidential. Wilhelm did not conceal his passion for Mariana from Madame Melina, and found unspeakable pleasure in the painful recital of his story. To the directress he revealed the secret of his attempts in authorship, recited her passages from his works, which were received by her with many praises and favourable comparisons. She on her part had nothing to disclose but her financial secrets, and whereas he went quite sincerely to work, she only revealed as much as she thought prudent.

Although they had so often and so fully discussed the ingenious and excellent in art, yet in its execution they unhappily lagged far behind. Wilhelm, who set great value on costume, was chiefly struck by the impropriety of bad and unsuitable clothes. Madame shrugged her shoulders and confessed that her best things had been pawned, and this for a trifle of fifty thalers, though on a pinch the Jews would sometimes let her have them out for a single evening's performance, an indulgence for which nevertheless she had to pay pretty dearly. No sooner had Wilhelm heard this than he took counsel with himself, and soon found motive and reason enough to lend this sum to his good friend, especially as he was reassured by her promise to repay him very shortly.

The holder of the pledge was sent for. There were also a few things of her husband's included, there was also interest to add, so that the total ran to more than seventy thalers, which he, however, willingly paid. As was natural, this magnanimous action did not remain unknown, and Madame de Retti found it convenient to draw advantage also from the sentiments thus aroused. For, as we have already heard above, her affairs really stood very

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

badly. During her whole progress through the world she had, with all her talents, won little and saved nothing. Whatever she made in larger towns and in times of good luck melted away at once in jovial living. Her restless character permitted her to extract but little profit from favourable circumstances, while in evil days her unyielding and arbitrary disposition forbade her from compliance and deference. As directress she often hungered, where as a subaltern actress in another company she might have found an ample competence.

The two women discoursed of various tragedies and other important plays which they wished to give in honour of the new visitor. They made him feel that he was not only a connoisseur, but also a lover and patron of the theatre. This they repeated on every hand, and understood so to state and apply it, that he finally resolved to come in his own person to the aid of that hard-pressed theatrical art which in prologues he had so often seen protected by Apollo. He argued to himself that he had a certain right to dispose as occasion required of the money which he had collected; that it was in a sense lost money; that he would economise on his travels; and that the cash was safe enough here, seeing that they offered to assign the entire wardrobe to him. It was by this time quite easy for him to promise his embarrassed friend three hundred thalers, and at last to pay out four hundred thalers. Mr. Melina, who at first seemed to dissuade him from this transaction, undertook to have it legally carried out, sent for a lawyer and had the assignment drawn up with due formality. By these means the imprisoned heroes and sultanas were set at liberty, the rich costumes delivered; new life came into the troupe, the alternation of plays attracted spectators, receipts became larger than ever. Wilhelm advanced a further sum to smarten up the old decorations, and they all took fresh courage. Now that Madame de Retti could here and there pay off a trifle from her secret debts, she obtained fresh credit; they ate, they drank, they lived gloriously and in merriment, asserting and swearing that during this season—spring was already

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

far advanced—they were having such a happy theatrical epoch as never before.

CHAPTER VIII

BUT their merriment was greatest when Wilhelm invited them all to his room and treated them at his own expense. Then indeed they showed themselves as happy and lighthearted as though they had never known want, and need never fear it. One day, as they sat at such a repast, they hit upon the idea of imitating the characters of different persons; and each chose something special. One represented a drunken man, another a Pomeranian nobleman, one a Lower-Saxon skipper, and another a Jew. As Wilhelm and Madame Melina could find themselves nothing, not being practised in imitation, Madame de Retti suggested in jest: "You can surely act the part of lovers, for that is a universal talent." She herself was a Tyrolese woman, with a round straw cover on her head instead of the little hat, and did the part very prettily, the impression being all the pleasanter because her comical sallies offered an agreeable contrast to her usual lofty manner. They pretended to be a company who had come together on a post-wagon, and, after descending at the hotel, were on the point of continuing their journey. Each one exerted his power of imagination to extract from the ordinary occurrences befalling such a company the most remarkable and comical situations, and to combine and execute the same with more or less taste. They incommoded and bantered each other; reproaches, threatenings, jocular notions and whatever else they could think of were employed, so that at last Wilhelm, who did not feel very easy in his rôle, laughed heartily as spectator, while the directress declared that no play had so amused her for a long time.

"How sorry I am," she said, "that we have abandoned the habit of extemporising. I have a hundred times regretted it, and am myself to blame; not that we ought

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

to have retained the old banalities and not brought out good plays as well. If we had extemporised only once a week, the actor would have been kept in practice and the public in a taste for this art. We should also have derived much profit from it, for extemporising was the school and touchstone of the actor. It was not a question merely of learning a part by heart and imagining one could play it, but wit, vivid imagination, adroitness, knowledge of the theatre and presence of mind were clearly revealed at every step; necessity compelled the actor to render himself familiar with all the resources afforded by the theatre, he became quite at home, like a fish in water, and any poet with sufficient gift to employ these tools might have wrought a great effect upon the public. But I allowed myself to be carried away by the art-critics, and being naturally inclined to seriousness, found no pleasure in antics and flourishes, but was happy to produce rather a *Chimene*, a *Rodogune*, a *Zaire* or a *Mérope*, considering myself and my company too respectable merely to amuse an audience as heretofore. I therefore banished the buffoon and buried harlequin; and if these had been permitted by circumstances to establish a theatre of their own, they might have parodied me splendidly as a queen, who in time of trouble dismisses her minister and general, to fall thereafter into the hands of feeble and stupid adversaries. And what German author is there who has given us back that which we renounced? But for the translations of Molière's dramas, we should not have known how to help ourselves, for our best original plays have the misfortune not to be dramatic."

Wilhelm was beginning to raise sundry objections to this assertion, when she cried to the actor who had represented a Jew, and who sat opposite to her: "Isn't it true, old man, that if we had had wit and luck enough to execute our plan at the right time, we could have given the Germans a splendid donation, which might have become the foundation of a National Theatre, and been utilised and polished by the best brains? We often discussed the advantages

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

of the Italian masque, and spoke of the interest arising from each member having a specific character, origin and language, and the convenience of each actor becoming completely master of a single personage, believing that, if he constantly acted the same character with geniality, instead of wearying the public, he would always be sure to delight it. We thought of producing something of this kind in the German manner. Our buffoon was to be from Salzburg, our country squire we thought to obtain from Pomerania, our doctor from Suabia, our old man was to be a Lower-Saxon tradesman, to whom we assigned a kind of sailor as servant. Our lovers were to talk High-German, and be natives of Upper-Saxony, while the beautiful Leonore, or whatever we might call her, was to be accompanied by a Leipzig chambermaid as Columbine. Our scene of action we intended to lay in seaports, commercial towns, or at great fairs, so as the more easily to bring all these people together. We ourselves proposed to introduce a travelling harlequin, pantaloon and Brighella, and by these contrasts to render our plays more varied and delightful. Our project was only superficial. But how much we might have won for it by time and leisure! Every fresh actor who joined the troupe would perhaps have brought some new idea, a striking imitation of some local peculiarity, among which we had especially not forgotten the Jews. Many people have jokes which peculiarly suit their individuality. The figures might even have gained a more intimate characteristic quality by some defect, such as stammering, limping, or what not, and we believed, at least then, that on these lines we should achieve a great success. But unfortunately the experiments which we attempted with the public failed, being made in defiance of the purists, with whom we had once more quarrelled. They prejudiced the best people against us, and our first attempts, which a few years earlier would certainly have met with approval, miscarried entirely. They did not even effect what we intended. Our actors were out of practice, we had not enough people to give

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

sufficient variety of character, and we were compelled to retire, to relinquish our project and follow the stream on which we still float. I am now convinced that without a miracle one could not bring this epoch back again. We are like people who, having strayed on to an inconvenient or bad path, have nevertheless advanced too far to retrace their steps and tread the other from the beginning."

She would have added more, but just then a great noise was heard outside, and immediately afterwards Mignon rushed into the room, followed menacingly by a strange man.

"If this creature belongs to you," said the unknown, "punish her in my presence for her naughtiness. She has smacked my face so that my ears buzz and my cheeks still tingle."

"How did you come to do that, Mignon?" asked Wilhelm.

Mignon, who had calmly taken refuge behind Wilhelm's chair, answered: "I have hands, I have nails, I have teeth; he shall not kiss me!"

"What, my good Sir?" cried Wilhelm. "So you are the attacking party? What right have you to demand from the child that which is improper?"

"I shall certainly," answered the stranger, "not stand on any great ceremony with such a creature. I wanted to kiss her and she was impertinent. I demand satisfaction."

"Sir," retorted Wilhelm, whose blood the stranger's insolence had stirred, "you would do better to ask the child for pardon and thank her for the lesson she has given you, for even then the balance of profit will be on your side."

To which the stranger proudly and threateningly replied: "If you refuse what is due to me, I will teach manners to the impertinent little thing with my whip wherever I meet her."

"Sir," cried Wilhelm, leaping up, while his eyes sparkled with anger, "and I swear that I will break the neck and bones of any man who harms a hair of the child." He

would have added yet more, but indignation hindered him, and in order to give it vent he would probably have flung the stranger out of the door, thus committing the first act of violence of his life, had not Madame Melina secretly pulled his coat-tail and drawn him towards herself.

The stranger paused at this rejoinder, and on the rest of the company perceiving this, they also summoned courage and fell upon him, especially the directress, with words of abuse, so that he thought it advisable to retire and leave the room with muttered growls and menaces. They made fun of him when he was gone, and especially of his fiery-red left cheek, praised Mignon's pluck, and when Wilhelm ordered in two fresh bottles of wine, grew merry, gay and confidential.

That evening, as Wilhelm sat writing in his room, a tap came at the door, and Mignon entered with a little box under her arm. "What are you bringing me?" cried he, looking up. Mignon had laid her right hand on her heart, and drawing the right foot behind the left, so that her knee almost touched the ground, made him a sort of Spanish salute with the utmost seriousness. A similar reverence followed in the middle of the room and, finally, as she reached him, she knelt quite down on her right knee, placed her box on the ground, seized Wilhelm's feet and kissed them with great ardour, but without any sign of emotion or tenderness. Wilhelm, who knew not what to make of this, wanted to raise her, but Mignon resisted and said in a tone of great solemnity: "Sir, I am your slave; buy me from my mistress that I may belong to you alone."

Thereupon she picked up the box from the ground and explained to him as well as she could that this was what she had saved towards buying her freedom. She begged him to accept it, and, being rich, to add whatever lacked of a hundred ducats. She would amply earn it for him, and would never leave him so long as he lived. All this she uttered with the utmost solemnity, earnestness and deference, so that Wilhelm was moved to the very inner-

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

most of his soul and could not answer. She straightway spread out her store of cash, the sight of which wrung a kindly smile from Wilhelm. Each different kind was wrapped up in separate rolls and bits of paper. She had made special tally-sticks for silver and copper, on the several sides of which she had cut the different sorts with alternate signs. Unknown and single coins she had separately marked at the lower ends of the sticks, and now explained her treasures to her lord and protector from this wonderful register. Wilhelm clearly perceived that the mid-day occurrence had made a deep impression upon her. He tried to reassure her by promising to take care of her money and to take thought for her; and vainly attempted to make her understand that he could not retain her by him or take her away with him. She departed, moving towards the door with the same reverences with which she had come, and from this time on, wherever she met or approached him, she always did so in the same manner, though remaining at a little distance.

CHAPTER IX

By degrees Madame de Retti had played to her theatrical guest and friend all those pieces on which she prided herself, and in many instances astonished and amazed her youthful critic. The rest of the troupe also did their utmost, especially now that the favour of the public continually increased, and a freer circulation of money once more completely restored the cycle of their halting humour.

And now at last Wilhelm began seriously to think of departure, whereof a kindly warning spirit had occasionally reminded him.

Most of the translated tragedies which Madame de Retti presented were, as everybody knows, constructed in very bad alexandrines. She often complained of this, and Wilhelm, to please her, transposed a few powerful passages into good verse, which gratified her so much,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

that she often recited them with great satisfaction. On quiet evenings he had sometimes read passages from his own works, which were highly applauded. These he carried more carefully than that letter-case, at the bottom of his trunk; but so far had never been in the right humour for giving them his tragedy of "Belshazzar." He had constantly put it off, and now proposed to give it them at a farewell feast. He took it out, looked at it, corrected this or the other awkward line, and though he did not approve of it as a whole, yet on fresh perusal, it mostly pleased him.

While he was thus busy Mignon entered. The child now waited on him regularly as her master, while not neglecting the others. Stepping up to him, she said: "Your waistcoat is blue; you are fond of blue, so I shall wear your colour."

"Delighted!" said Wilhelm. "I shall be only the better pleased to see you;" and he gave her a blue and white silk necktie. "Dear, good-hearted child," he thought to himself, "what will become of you, how can I care for you, except by earnestly commending you to your mistress? If you were a boy, you should certainly travel with me, and I would support and train you as well as possible." He paced up and down the room musing on the fate of this child, feeling at one and the same moment that he must forsake her, and yet that he could not forsake her.

Taking up his manuscript, he went across to Madame de Retti's, whither he had ordered a bowl of punch to be sent, and where he found the pick of the actors assembled. "I do not know," said he, "whether you are inclined to hear a piece which is here and there perhaps a little too spiritual?"

They assured him they would all be very attentive, which was possibly not quite true, for some would rather have played cards, while others would have preferred conversation. He began to read; but, for the sake of what followed, it will be necessary that we here say something of the contents.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

The King, his character, life and conduct, have already been made known to us in the preceding Book. At his Court there dwelt a Princess named Candate, whose father had been deposed from his kingdom by Nebuchadnezzar. She cherished a secret and unappeasable hatred against the conqueror's son, and sought occasion to avenge both herself and her father's spirit, and, if possible, to exchange her present condition for a throne.

Eron, her friend, a lord of the old court, who cannot bear to find himself neglected by the young King, and is prepared to risk everything to recover his former influence, has hatched a conspiracy with the Princess. They have entered into negotiation with the Median King Darius, who has promised, in case of failure, to be their reserve support. Darius himself has designs on Babylon. He visits the Court in a strange costume and appears before Belshazzar as a Median general. To the conspirators he reveals himself as one who knows their secret ; yet even they fail to recognise in him the King. On the night preceding Belshazzar's birthday, which has been fixed for the execution of their project, the conspirators gather one by one in a hall of the palace, where the purpose of their intrigue gradually develops. Eron's proposal is to set the Princess upon the throne and affiancé her to the King of the Medes. The disguised Darius, speaking as ambassador, holds out hope of the royal assent, but without any definite promise. The Princess conceives a passion for the disguised hero, but without suspecting his lofty rank, and desires to possess with him the throne of Babylon. But the Prince cherishes quite other designs, quite other cares within his breast. Much as he longs to rend the kingdom from its unworthy monarch, yet the treachery which would help him to this prize is equally loathsome. And, O wondrous fate ! love comes to intermeddle even here. Nitocris, wife of Belshazzar, has touched his heart. For her he glows with intensest passion, but fears she would never surrender heart and hand to her husband's murderer. By all sorts of arguments he therefore seeks to persuade the conspirators to

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

defer their enterprise for a while, and, to Eron's great disgust, the assembly breaks up without decision.

Wilhelm, who knew the piece almost verbatim, read it very well and with many shades of expression. Each listener chose out in thought a person whom he might represent, each praised the young author and drank his health in a glass of punch. The directress was ravished with the rôle of the Princess as though it had been written in her own honour, begged the manuscript for a moment and read at once several proud, agitated and imperious passages.

Wilhelm, whose pleasure was as great as might be that of a ship-builder, whose first large ship glides from the stocks into the water, and floats for the first time before his eyes, still further stimulated his spirits with the fiery liquor, and commenced the second act, whose opening soliloquy we saw in the preceding Book.

The young King, fully resolved to begin his birthday with worship of the gods and meditations upon himself, wishes to send for Daniel to converse with him. A courtier who intervenes diverts his intention, and he yields himself up to the stream of festivities prepared for him. He can scarcely listen to the felicitations of his royal consort, whose presence indeed troubles him, for he feels conscious that he is not treating her, the tenderest and most amiable of princesses, as he ought. A monologue expresses her tranquil complaints, in the midst of which Darius interrupts her. This last scene was not received with the approval it merited, being too delicately conceived for these listeners. The young hero betrays his passion while endeavouring to hide it, and the Queen's true sentiments towards him remain concealed, although she speaks with frank and honest heart. Again at the end of this second act there was a repetition of universal approbation, to which an older poet and one better acquainted with the public would have attached less value.

The first bowl of punch was empty, and a second was ordered, which the host, being forewarned, brought at once. With enhanced enthusiasm they commenced to read and

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

hear the third act. In an interview with Daniel, the Wise Man, the Queen unlocks the chaste recesses of her heart. Her quiet endurance of fate, the inward assurance of her unsullied being, render her figure in the highest degree lovable. Darius is now seen beside her husband, and the appearance of the young hero makes a happy impression upon her, while the realisation of his great worth shines like a gentle glow through the troubled twilight of her existence. She is conscious of no evil in this pleasant sensation, and Daniel is wise enough not to disturb it. One of the Queen's ladies of honour now approaches, and relates the course of the festivities up to that moment. The King next enters, surrounded by the magnates of his empire, who offer congratulations, to which also the Queen and Daniel add their own. They now rise for the banquet, at which Nitocris begs to be excused attendance. This is easily granted her, and thus concludes the third act.

The propriety of introducing one of the four great prophets on the theatre was ripely discussed, and this critical consideration diminished somewhat the favourable effect of this act.

In the opening of the fourth act Eron appears with one of the conspirators, much depressed that so precious an opportunity of executing their project had escaped them. He begins to misdoubt the Median emissary, and is inclined to suspect him of cherishing other and secret intentions, possibly even of placing his King on the throne without their co-operation and excluding the Princess altogether. Meanwhile, offended by the frantic revelry at table, the latter had risen and returned hither, and to her Eron reveals his conjecture. They determine to carry out their plans behind the Median Prince, to keep a watchful eye upon him, and in any case, and until the deed is done, to take him prisoner. At this moment Darius comes up to them and gives a lively description of furious debauch at the banquet, from which he had unperceived retired. He relates how the golden and silver vessels dedicated to the God of the Jews had just been fetched, and that divine honours were being paid to the King. Eron leaves them,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

with a signal to the Princess to explore the stranger's sentiments. Their interview runs its course with great frigidity. Eron returns, relates the awful story of the wonder which had appeared, and insists upon their plan being consummated, seeing that the gods themselves have given a sign. Darius makes fruitless evasions.

At the beginning of the fifth act the dispirited King appears, terrified by the interpretation of the mysterious inscription, and none but his wife stands by him in this hour of dread misfortune. After a touching scene he leaves her, and in the very same moment is murdered by the conspirators.

The Princess advances, assumes the kingdom and places the Queen under guard. She commands that the hitherto imprisoned stranger be set at liberty. But Darius, having overpowered his guards, appears at the head of Median soldiers, who have penetrated by a secret way into the city, throws off his disguise, proclaims himself as master; the conspirators join hands with him; he assigns a royal portion of lands and wealth to the Princess, and comforts the sorrowing Queen in such gentle wise that the spectators conceive good hope of his future happiness, although at this point the curtain falls.

And now ensued a chattering and noise, in which each only spoke of himself, and none could hear his own voice for the others. The piece must be acted; in this they were all loudly unanimous.

Wilhelm, seeing them all thus inflamed, was highly delighted to find so many men inspired by the fire of his poetry. He fancied he beheld that which glowed in himself diffused among them; he felt them, like himself and with himself, elevated above the commonality. He uttered words full of spirit, full of nobility and love.

Meanwhile their provident landlord had never allowed the bowl to become empty, and his guests found its contents more luscious than ever. They shouted their noisy plaudits, and their joy grew more and more tumultuous. They freely drank Wilhelm's health, and bawled until he grew disgusted, and his spirits, excited by many glasses of

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

punch and the declamation of his play, were powerfully and unpleasantly depressed. But the noise grew louder; they drank to the poet and his art in renewed bumpers, and swore that after such a feast no one was worthy to drink again out of these glasses and vessels, and straightway violently flung the long-stemmed glasses up to the ceiling, the directress vainly protesting. They smashed the punch-bowl, and the dregs ran out on the floor. Such glasses as refused to break were vigorously hurled against the walls, and rebounded, along with the shattered window-panes, with much clatter into the street. In the corners lay one and another of the overcharged guests, others staggered about, all raved; they sang, they howled; and Wilhelm, after summoning the host, crept away to his room with confused and very uncomfortable sensations.

CHAPTER X

WILHELM passed most of the Sunday morning which succeeded this boisterous night in sleep, and awoke with a sense of depression. His intention of packing up last evening after the reading, of at last writing to Werner, ordering posthorses and departing early this morning had remained unfulfilled. He dressed himself, wondering the while what he should do. Mignon entered, bringing water as usual, and enquired what he wanted. The sight of the child cheered him, for she had bound his white and blue silk tie round her neck, and begged among the actresses various scraps of blue taffeta, which she had very cleverly stitched on to her vest as facings and collar, so that it looked quite gay. She brought compliments from the directress, who begged the loan of yesterday's piece for this morning only. He sent it with a promise to follow soon after.

When he arrived he found Mesdames Melina and de Retti busy reading over the play, especially the parts of the Princess and Queen. "We must act it!" cried the

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

directress on seeing him. "You must leave it with us." Madame Melina cast him one of her sweetest glances and begged most kindly. It was the first time that the two ladies were both of one mind. The directress felt herself perfectly suited for the rôle of the Princess, while Madame Melina earnestly longed to play the young Queen. A handsome young fellow, who showed signs of development, was proposed as Belshazzar. An experienced old actor was to be Eron, Daniel was assigned to Mr. Melina, and an actress was also chosen for the lady of honour. The other characters were all unimportant; except Darius, for whom Madame de Retti quite at the last, and with some embarrassment, suggested her favourite, Mr. Bendel.

Were it not that we consider it improper and regard such a pun as unpalatable, we would simply call this man Mr. "Bengel" ("lubber"), and therewith indicate his character and quality by a single word. He was a clumsy, broadly-built figure, without the least deportment and without feeling. Besides possessing none of the qualities of a comedian, he had all those faults which ensure an actor's rejection. To mention only one, he mumbled his words, if by this expression we may describe one who by a snuffling tone and sluggish tongue articulated them badly. Small eyes, thick lips, short arms, broad chest and back—enough, he had found grace in the eyes of his patroness. We have hitherto avoided mention, except in passing, of this sorry figure, and only do so here with unwillingness, particularly as he now appears much to our hero's annoyance.

The startled author raised sundry objections to this person, though with moderation, because he knew the circumstances; but he was confuted, and unfortunately it was necessity that confuted him, for there was no one in all the troupe who could do the part better. They declared that he had played the part of Count Essex with approval; but, alas! this Count Essex, in which Wilhelm had seen him, lay like a heavy stone on the young author's heart.

They talked so long and so much that at last Wilhelm, the incurable optimist,* hoped that, after all, it might be

* Literally, "the old hopper."

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

possible for this actor, by diligence and pains, to improve himself in this rôle, and already began to idealise him in spirit. Finally he gave way, and it was decided to get to work as soon as possible.

On this occasion they had run through the whole company, and also spoken of Mignon and the incapacity of the child to represent anything. Wilhelm had seen her in a few plays, in which her small parts had been so dryly, so stiffly done that one might say they were not acted at all. She repeated her lesson and made haste to get away. He took her under his own care and sometimes made her recite ; but even here he was not at all content with her. When asked to exert herself, her expression became equally strained in common and important passages alike, she spoke everything with a fantastic exaltation ; and when he required her to be natural or asked her to repeat after him, she never understood what and how he wanted her to act.

Yet one day he heard her strumming on a zither, which lay among the theatrical belongings. He had it properly strung, and Mignon began in her broken moments of leisure to play all sorts of things on it and to extemporise, but always in singular postures as usual. At one time she would sit on the topmost rung of a ladder, with her legs crossed under her, like a Turk on his carpet ; at others she promenaded on the eaves of the courtyard buildings, where the plaintive tone of her strings, which she sometimes accompanied with an agreeable but somewhat rough voice, made everyone listen, surprised and startled. Some compared her to an ape, others to some strange animal ; but all concurred in saying that there was something singular, foreign and romantic in the child. No one could understand what she sang, and the melodies were always the same, or very similar, though she seemed variously to modify them according to her feelings, thoughts, situations and whims. At night she sat on Wilhelm's threshold or on the branch of a tree beneath his window, and sang most delightfully. If he showed his face behind the window-panes, or began to move in the room, she was off

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

immediately. She had by this time made herself so necessary to Wilhelm that he could not rest in the morning until he had seen her, and late at night he usually called for a glass of water that he might wish her good night. Had he yielded to his impulse, he would have treated her as his daughter and devoted himself heart and soul to her welfare.

CHAPTER XI

THE various parts were written out and learned. Each one accepted Wilhelm's advice more or less, read over the scenes with him and in his presence, and even the directress hearkened to his admonitions. They aimed at a truthful, impassioned and powerful declamation. By this co-operation such harmony was speedily brought into the play that even the rehearsals were pleasant and good to listen to. Madame Melina took the utmost pains, and Wilhelm failed not to second her zeal. In a few days she knew her part by heart. Wilhelm had to say it over to her bit by bit, to act each scene with her, and she almost attained the correct expression. Nevertheless the tranquil purity, the gentle nobility, the inward tenderness of the Queen lay not in her character; there was a special tone, a certain settled emotion which she could not reproduce. Yet still much was accomplished, and Wilhelm grew daily more content.

The coarseness, the ill-manners and the stupidity of Lubber Bendel offered the worst possible contrast to this unanimity of the actors among themselves and with the play. He was by nature self-opinionated, and had a great idea of his acting. But this time he was doubly and trebly obstinate, having conceived a fierce and uncontrollable jealousy against Wilhelm, whom he saw the directress treat with so much respect; and this sometimes manifested itself uncivilly, especially during the study and rehearsal of the piece. As the unsavoury mortal drank every day and was scarcely sober in the morning, his bad and ill-

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

regulated presentation was thereby rendered the more disagreeable. In sheer vexation he continued to pour in more wine, so that, having a full-blooded constitution, he was several times struck down at the theatre by a species of dizziness, and had to be carried home and bled. Thus he disturbed the peace, order and amenity of the studying and rehearsing company, which for a long time had not felt so happy and united, and which, in prospect of the rich revenue which this piece was to procure, displayed double and treble zeal.

Meantime Wilhelm made a fresh acquaintance. He had several times sat during the performance next to an officer, and noted that he judged the plays and the actors with good taste. Sometimes, to while away an hour, he had visited the parade-ground, where this man usually came up to him and conversed of literary subjects. With great admiration and interest he at last asked him if it were true that a play of his own was shortly to be produced. Wilhelm confessed, and the other evinced friendly sympathy. The officer was one of those good souls who are by nature framed to take hearty interest in all that happens to others, or that others achieve. His rank, while condemning him to a hard and insolent calling, and thus encasing him in a coarse shell, had made him yet softer within. In a strict service, where for years everything had moved in the most rigid order, where brazen necessity was the only goddess worshipped, where justice became harshness and cruelty, and the conception of man and humanity completely vanished, his good soul, which in a free and independent life would have revealed its beauty and found its existence, was altogether repressed, his feelings blunted and almost reduced to ruin. The only innocent pleasure which remained for him was the newly budding German literature. With this he was familiar down to its smallest details. He knew what we possessed and what we lacked, he hoped, he longed, and though he knew some foreign languages and read their best authors, yet in his heart he preferred the narrower household of his father-

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

land to all their wealth, because he felt himself nearer to it.

In this goodly fashion he was partial, and promised himself from the next generation everything which the present had not produced. One might call him a true patriot, one of those who, in silence, and without knowing it, have done so much to assist the reception and encouragement of science among us.

Occasionally they played billiards, and sometimes took walks together, and were mutually a great help to each other. Wilhelm, who beyond the field of drama was not well informed, was introduced to the wider circle of beautiful literature, and no day passed without profit or without the joy of a new intellectual acquaintanceship.

When Herr von C—— read his young friend's tragedy, he was delighted and astounded. He ranked it above all that had been written or known in German verse, and begged him to continue on this path, desiring only that he might have wider knowledge of the world and man, so as to impress the right value and the correct stamp upon his works.

"This piece," said he, "much as I appreciate it, is only written from within outwards. It is only one single man who feels and acts. One can see that the author knows his own heart, but does not know men."

This Wilhelm willingly admitted, and more too, and would have thrown out the baby with the bath-water. Yet he readily let himself be contradicted, when, with knowledge and judgement, the officer indicated the true worth of the play.

CHAPTER XII

MADAME MELINA now gave our young poet no rest. She was wise enough to perceive the advantages she might herself derive from him. In tragedy she had hitherto been received with indifference, and hoped this time to be more fortunate. He generally rehearsed with

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

her every day, and she appeared quite delighted with the manner in which he rendered Darius.

Mignon usually seated herself in a corner while they recited, and was indeed always present when Wilhelm read or declaimed, never quitting him with her eyes, and seeming quite to forget herself. Sometimes she asked him for a lesson to learn by heart, and he generally chose her one from his own works. She learned quickly too, but could not gain skill in recitation.

One day, when Wilhelm and Madame Melina had finished and were talking of various verses, the child asked if she might say her part. Being permitted, she began the following passage which he had yesterday copied for her from "The Queenly Anchorite," and recited it very pathetically. Meanwhile he paced up and down the room, without paying her much attention, and really thinking of something else.

"Bid me not speak ; be nothing spoken,
For duty bids my secret hold ;
For thee my silence willingly I'd broken,
But Fate forbids that aught be told.

"The sun's ascent with circling hours expels
The gloomy night, and tips with fire the mountains;
The flinty rock it's bosom's secret tells,
Nor grudges earth her deeply hidden fountains.

"And each one seeks in friend's embrace to rest,
And breathe his griefs unto a list'ning lover ;
An oath its seal upon my lips hath press'd,
And God alone their freedom can recover."

Wilhelm did not notice how she spoke the first few lines, but when she reached the last, they were uttered with such an emphasis of sincerity and truth that she aroused him from his dreams, and it sounded to him as though another person were speaking. In his to-and-fro pacing he happened to be turned away from her ; but, wheeling quickly round, he gazed upon the child, which, as soon as it had done, bowed as usual.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

Wilhelm's plans, wherewith he consoled himself, were now formed. He had resolved to await the presentation of his play, then to depart immediately, and excuse his prolonged stay to Werner.

The work meanwhile proceeded, and they considered what costumes and decorations would be necessary in order to do justice to his play. Our officer helped to such books and travellers' descriptions as could best assist in the choice of oriental garb. Of decent tragic decoration there was but little, and although the scene was to be very rarely changed, yet this must be provided, and, as was natural, the burden here also fell upon the good-natured poet. He had to be guarantee for cloth and muslin, canvas and paint, for tailor and scene-painter, and must content himself with a promise, such as had not hitherto yielded him much fruit, that they would at once reimburse him from the expected receipts. Meanwhile the requisites now to be provided were also assigned to him, along with the rest, as security. Thus all became more and more concentrated. In fact the usual musicians were not considered worthy to play on so festive an occasion, and the regimental oboeists received permission—against liberal payment—to take their places.

All these fair prospects were marred by the presence at every rehearsal of the wretched form of the lubberly Darius. Wilhelm did his utmost to draw over his eyes that curtain of self-deception, which else seldom failed him. First he hoped the man would seem more presentable in a handsome costume; then trusted that the force of the harmony wherewith the others played would bear him along with them; and even comforted himself with the expectation of a miracle, and that possibly on the evening of presentation the hard shell of his nature would burst and bring some pleasant apparition to view. Finally, he set his hopes upon the lighting and the rouge, summoning every natural and unnatural possibility to his consolation and hope. But all was in vain! No sooner did the fellow open his mouth than every illusion was destroyed, and though, on the one hand, he awaited the day with utmost

longing, yet it was with a shudder of terror that he beheld this depressing figure make its entry.

CHAPTER XIII

THE public now began to evince some interest in our author. They pointed him out to each other, saying that he was the man whose play was shortly to be produced, and in every social circle he became a topic of conversation. He learned to know several officers. Herr von C—— introduced him to a house where a lady and her two daughters formed the nucleus of an agreeable coterie. They knew their Gellert by heart, not unskilfully reproduced Rabener's jests, sang Zacharia's songs and played the piano prettily. Wilhelm was everywhere well received, because he was very modest and, on closer acquaintance, ingenuous and vivacious. He felt quite at ease in this new sphere ; though it happened with him as with other young people, namely, that out of sheer good nature and compliance he surrendered himself to the predominant tone of each society. In one he was gentle, retiring and inconspicuous, in another he grew visionary ; among the officers he became loud, and drank also occasionally beyond measure ; and these alternations in his mode of life brought him into a kind of confusion with himself.

The title and scope of his play had now become known, several had heard fragments of it recited, a few amateurs had even slipped in to rehearsal ; on every side people began to talk and judge. The clergy became attentive when they heard that Daniel, the fourth among the great prophets, was to be presented by a vagabond comedian. They carried the question to a higher quarter, and, in the absence of the chief magistrate, an order was issued to Madame de Retti not to perform the piece. What unexpected mishap ! what consternation ! what worry ! Herr von C—— soon heard the news ; it angered him, and that

industry which he ever exerted for his friends was here also salvation for both author and actors. He hurried round, he demonstrated, he persuaded. Luckily Racine's "Athalie" was just then being played in the capital in French. He proved that our drama was much less insidious, seeing that, although the story be in the Bible, yet all the characters are undoubtedly heathen, with the single exception of Daniel, who utters quite excellent moral precepts. His endeavours and arguments, but yet more the influence which he exercised on sundry intelligent women, and his friends upon some who were not intelligent, soon brought the matter back into its rut, and the interdict was removed.

At last the day was fixed, and the final rehearsal was to take place on the preceding evening. They wanted also to see the decorations and costumes by artificial light. Wilhelm was on his feet the whole day long. He had not only equipped the theatre as well as possible, but also had the proscenium and even the boxes re-covered with fresh cloth in place of the former shabby rags, and painted with architectural adornments. In order to double the lighting, numerous lamps and candlesticks were procured, in all of which business he found much pleasure and satisfaction, as here he could apply all the acquired knowledge and ideas he had hitherto cherished, and also carry most of them into execution. He decorated the whole booth as prettily as though it had been a Christmas booth,* and found himself so happy therein that he never even went home to dinner, but had his mid-day meal sent to him. He acted and recited to himself, made plans for new plays, and his heart throbbed with joy and expectation as he pictured the terraced rows of heads instead of empty benches and walls.

Mr. and Mrs. Melina did not come until evening, when they brought the evil intelligence that the dreadful Bendel had again been struck down by a severe attack of his malady. He had fits of shivering and heat, his blood all rushed to his head, and sometimes he seemed as though

* Refers to the special booths erected at the Christmas fairs.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

he would choke. A doctor had at once been fetched, who assured them that it was only a passing attack like the former and was not serious. It was the result of excess, and if the man would only keep quiet for the night and take the prescribed medicine, he would certainly be able to play next day. "Will you be so good," said Madame Melina, "as to take his part this evening? You know the piece so through and through that you could prompt out of your head, and it would be a great advantage for all that you should be yourself our leader, so that the directress may not be ordering first this and then that, of which all the while she is not herself sure."

The others followed after and spoke in the same sense. The band also had been ordered. Sundry suitable, serious and stately pieces were selected from various symphonies to be rendered between the acts. They began to rehearse, and Wilhelm, anxious to fire the others, himself took fire and excelled himself in language and action. Everyone did his best, so that in the end each felt heartily satisfied both with himself and the rest.

"Alas! how different it will be," said Madame Melina, "when to-morrow our heavy hero steps forth, making the boards creak, and the very theatre tremble! Would to heaven, my friend, that you were destined for this art, and not obliged wantonly to conceal and bury the splendid talent Nature has given you!"

"You see, my dear lady," said he, "that unfortunately my way is blocked in that direction."

"It only seems so," answered Madame Melina; "I was in a similar case, but it is only a paper door, which one can break through with an elbow."

They were interrupted by the tailor bringing the clothes. Each retired, and they put on the costumes, which were voted handsome, but not fine enough, and he was ordered to sew on more muslin and to fetch more tinsel. At last they went home, where the first question was: how was the sick man? They were told that he was asleep, and it was the first time that his sleeping or waking had ever interested anybody except the directress.

CHAPTER XIV

THE next day's dawn appeared and awakened Wilhelm early. He heard that Bendel had passed a quiet night and still slept. From this he took good hope, and hastened to the scene of action, where several workmen were still busy. Towards noon everything was finished, and the changes of scene, although they fell between the acts, were carefully tested, and as he returned home several post-carriages passed him containing strangers whom rumour had attracted. For the first time he enjoyed the pleasure of seeing the public set in motion by himself. The still damp playbills ran from house to house, and the name "Belshazzar" in big letters greeted him from every corner gable.

Reaching home, he found various servants and people with money in their hands. It was the first time the directress had not known how to help herself, for all the boxes were taken and all tickets disposed of. They had already begun to write out some more; but Wilhelm stopped them, as the people would not be able to find room, or else would be miserably crowded, or perhaps have to be turned away.

Bendel meanwhile had risen, stretched himself in his chair and consumed a hearty breakfast. He was the only one who did not know his rôle quite by heart; and, what was still worse, had from the very start read some lines wrongly, and in others accustomed himself through ignorance to transpose the words, thereby rendering the sense of some important passages quite ridiculous. By dint of much remonstrance he had become more attentive to these points, yet before one was aware the accustomed error was sure to reissue from his unskilful brain. He then began to stammer, and instead of correcting the fault, entangled his unwieldy tongue in a double and triple *quid pro quo*. His part now lay beside him, and as he repeated it, he seemed even at this moment to forget it at the opportune time. Wilhelm, who just then entered the room, could

not bear the spectacle and hurried impatiently out, while the directress was in the greatest embarrassment.

How many hundred times has it not been observed that when a man's fairest desire is at last fulfilled in all its wide circumference, some earthly addition comes to spoil it, and his pleasantest enjoyment is oft-times changed to torment? Our friend now beheld that day appear for which as a boy he so often had longed.

Children, we notice, are first incited by the outward form of the trade followed by their fathers, or which they feel otherwise tempted to adopt. Stick in hand, they make themselves moustachios, so as to be soldiers, or they procure ropes to be coachmen, or make them paper surplices to be parsons. Just so had it fared with our young poet. As a boy he wrote out playbills, on which dramas, which were not completed, and never would be completed, were announced by gorgeous titles. When afterwards he wrote down the personages of a play and its first scenes, he imagined how fine it would be to see them printed in all the glory of splendid type, like the first edition of Lessing's works. Again, when he sat in the pit, while an opening symphony exalted the spirits of the audience: "Ah!" thought he, "if ever you should be so happy as to sit in front of the curtain and listen to the overture to a play of your own!" The dear lad hoped then that, when such a day arrived, his own piece would seem to him as extraordinary, and he himself as deserving of honour as at that time authors and their works appeared to him. And which of us does not feel exactly the same, when we behold others resplendent in wealth, rank, titles, offices and honours?

And now the day was here! Yet how far short it fell of the rapture with which as a child he had watched that domestic puppet-play for the first time! Worn out with rehearsals, the piece appeared to him almost trivial. Conscience-stricken as regards his own people for the length of his stay, yet fettered by the money he so thoughtlessly had lent, and during these last few days had converted into a boarded stage, he felt by no means clear as to the wisdom

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

of his course. And yet his passion would have overcome everything, had not that confounded Darius completely upset his equanimity. He was like a dancer, who otherwise feels quite brisk, but, alas ! just as he mounts the stage his big toe begins to hurt most horribly.

Once more then he hastened to the theatre and found consolation in the quiet and order there reigning. The upholsterer had come and was just laying a great carpet of green baize on the stage, an expense which cut deep into Wilhelm's purse, though he felt convinced that it added just the last touch of dignity to his tragedy. The hours continued to run their course, and towards four o'clock idle spectators began seeking out the best seats. By about five o'clock the house was pretty full, except the reserved boxes. The musicians had arrived, and with their insufferable tuning and tinkling were giving the audience good hope that the scene of action would speedily be revealed. One after the other the actors came in fully dressed ; the foremost lamps were lighted, and they only lacked the two Princesses and the Median hero, else everything was ready for the start. Each actor presented himself in full costume to our friend, who was busy straightening and suggesting, when sundry servants arrived in haste from the town, enquiring if the play was to be given ? It was rumoured, they said, that an actor had fallen ill, and the tragedy could not be played. Wilhelm assured them it was a mistake ; the man was better, and they would begin at the hour announced, which was not far off. Among these enquirers was a servant of his military friend, whom he dismissed with the same message.

Scarcely had he done this, when Madame de Retti sent to ask him to come to the hotel with all possible speed, and her messenger did not hide the fact that Mr. Bendel had just that moment had a fresh attack of illness. Full of alarm Wilhelm ran thither, and found both women in royal attire busy with the half-clad man, who lay insensible in a chair, the physician by his side, while a surgeon opened a vein. Madame de Retti was beside herself, Madame Melina nearly frantic, while the doctor railed against the

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

immoderate man, who after taking his usual meal could not deny himself his bottle of wine, whereby the disease still lodging in his body had received a fresh impetus. He declared there was no alternative for them but to disrobe and play another piece. As the sick man's blood flowed he recovered slightly, and the doctor ordered the theatre tailor, who stood by, to undress him quickly and help to get him to bed.

Wilhelm stood motionless. A weight lay upon him as on one whom an Alp oppresses ; he could not stir a limb, but felt as though his blood froze and his heart stood still. With the two women he retired to an adjoining chamber. " Whatever shall we do ? " he exclaimed. The coaches, set in motion by the news which he had given to the servants, began to rattle. He was as nervous as a man whose burden begins to roll downhill and he cannot stop it, or like one who is beginning to slip and then to slide. " Whatever shall we do ? " cried Madame de Retti, gazing in Madame Melina's distracted eyes.

" Ah ! " exclaimed the latter in an agitated tone, " there is only one way out ! My dear Sir, my friend !—— "

" Yes, our friend," cried the directress, seizing him, like the other, by the hand, " you must save us ! "

He stood there between the two women, whose whole soul was exalted by the terror, the fear, the embarrassment, the anxiety which in this moment overwhelmed them. He understood them not—and a moment later he understood it all—and like a flash all his vital spirits woke to motion. With the thought that they could demand it of him, that it was possible, the burden which crushed his bosom at once rolled away, the oppressive silence was broken. But in their place a storm of doubts and wishes, of courage and nervousness burst upon him, beneath which he almost sank. " What do you say ? " he cried out. " No, it cannot be. "

" But look at our embarrassment," exclaimed Madame de Retti, " and feel your own. We are lost if we do not satisfy the public ; our fate hangs upon your will, and all this vast confusion will be cleared up by a word from you,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

cleared up in the loveliest fashion, for nobody can play this part like yourself."

"How delightful our rehearsal was yesterday," cried Madame Melina. "Ah! when I imagine to-day's performance like that, why, I grow wild with rapture, and every anxiety is turned into joy."

Thus turn about they continued the attack. Each said something more urgent and more seductive; their agitated souls stirred him more than their words; their handsome costumes and stately mien added impressiveness to what they spoke.

"You cannot refuse," cried the Princess, "for our whole fortune depends upon this day. Besides, you owe it to me, for this is the only method by which I can cease to be your debtor. I have often tasted misfortune, but if in this moment we exasperate the public, and cheat its expectation, I shall be more wretched than ever." Tears streamed down her cheeks, a tear glistened in Madame Melina's eye, his own eyes grew moist, and he no longer knew how to refuse them.

"Do you wish to see me at your feet?" exclaimed the haughty Princess, kneeling down before him.

"Can we more humbly beseech?" cried the bewitching Queen, and fell down before him on the opposite side.

He could no longer resist, and obliged them to stand up. He could not say "Yes," and had not strength to utter a decided "No." Madame de Retti arose and went to the window to dry her tears.

"Make up your mind," said Madame Melina privately. "No one knows your right name save my husband and myself. You are absolutely unknown here, and your stay in this town is a secret to your own relatives. I swear that the fact shall never pass over our lips."

"Oh that a thousandth part of what you have ever felt for the dramatic art," cried Madame de Retti, who had turned round again, "might soften your stony heart in this moment!"

The clock struck six.

Her wish had already begun to operate before she

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

uttered it. What both these women in the anguish of their hearts regarded as possible, that might he also at last regard as possible, agitated as he was, if only he could rightly feel it in the opportune moment. Was not his own dearest wish fulfilled? A good spirit had disabled the fatal sinner who blasted the entire harmony of his happy poesy. To him was given to snatch the crown of applause, nay, the task was imposed upon him of deciding the fate of his own play and of his friends. A coincidence of every circumstance seemed this day to demand this sacrifice, which yet resembled the greatest triumph a man could well achieve. He grew thoughtful, he hesitated; the women said no more, they seized him by the hand and gazed movingly at him. If only a friend had been there, of whom he might take counsel!

Someone clattered noisily up the stairs, and cried that they must delay no longer; the house was packed, the public growing impatient, and had been already stamping for a quarter of an hour. A single "Yes," said the women, would make an end of this unforgivable disaster.

"It is impossible," said Wilhelm. "How could I remember the part in such a confusion? And where can I get a dress all in a moment which would look decent and harmonise with the others, which are all new?"

As soon as he began to raise objections he was lost. Madame Melina removed the first at once, and for the second the directress summoned the theatre-tailor. "Can you fit Mr. Bendel's dress on this gentleman quickly?" she asked.

"It cannot be done," cried Wilhelm, he is much bigger and stouter than I am."

"That doesn't matter at all," said the tailor. "Taking in can be done much faster than letting out; better too big than too little. I shall be done in a quarter of an hour; such jobs happen a thousand times." The directress made him a sign, and he ran across and fetched the clothes.

"What are you doing?" asked Wilhelm. "I cannot make up my mind."

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

"There is nothing else for us," responded she.

A second messenger rushed in. "Why are you stopping?" he cried in breathless haste. "The audience is becoming unmanageable; the pit is shouting for the piece and stamps and rages; the crowded gallery cracks with the disorder; some are crying for their money back, while the boxes threaten to send for their coaches. The musicians keep on playing all the time so as to allay the storm as best they can."

The two messengers stood side by side awaiting reply; the tailor returned with the clothes over his arm.

"I will send someone," cried the directress, "so that the public may have a little patience." She went out of the door with the messengers; Wilhelm said neither "Yes" nor "No," but suffered himself to be dressed. Outside she instructed the old man who was to take the part of Eron to step before the curtain and address the audience with his usual persuasiveness, informing them of the circumstances, begging for just a quarter of an hour's delay, and promising the best with all humility and modesty.

The nimble fingers of the tailor and of a sewing-woman who had been fetched quickly transformed our friend into the hero before he bethought him what they were doing. Madame Melina herself combed his hair into the flowing locks, which a splendidly adorned helmet with large feathers was designed to compress. The armour, the short apron, the mantle and girdle glittered as though they were real, and fitted as if moulded to his figure. Luckily a pair of new laced boots were found which fitted the hero exactly. He was armed in almost less time than Homer's heroes when preparing for the urgent fight.

He viewed himself in the mirror, and the old spirit of the actor swept down upon him. He adjusted the objects which adorned him, while the women polished right and left and gave him no chance of coming to himself. Before he knew what was happening he had mounted the carriage and was standing on the green carpet to the unmeasured astonishment and great joy of the other actors.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

With a shudder he peeped through the hole in the curtain at the crowded audience. The opening symphony of the play commenced, and his spirit, which had been flung from one passion to another, recovered its balance and recalled the first lines of his part to memory. With hero-step he measured the green carpet several times, spoke to one and another, charged the prompter and scene-shifter to be careful, and in less than a minute appeared as familiar with his situation as though he had known it for years.

Like one who, having painfully and insecurely stumbled on leather soles over frozen and lumpy ground, treads at last the glassy ice, and, fastening on his skates, is borne away on them, and with facile flight forsakes the banks and, forgetting on the smoother element his former step and state, now skims along with admirable skill, leaving the crowds of curious spectators behind him on the quay ; or like Mercury, who, having donned his golden wings, now lightly moves across land and sea to fulfil the behest of the gods—so now did our hero stride in his half-boots over the stage, intoxicated and void of care, until the last presto of the symphony obliged him to hide behind the coulisses.

The curtain rustled upwards, and my readers must permit that at this point I let it fall again.

FOURTH BOOK

CHAPTER I

Know'st thou the land where citron-blossom blows,
Where orange-gold 'mid verdant leafage glows,
Where bluest skies their gentle breezes breathe,
Where myr les calm with happy laurels wreathe ?
Know'st thou it well ?

'Tis there, 'tis there,
O my commander, I with thee would fare !

Know'st thou the house ? Its ceilings columns bear.
The hall gleams white, its chambers shimmer fair,
And marble statues, standing, gaze at me :
“ Alas ! poor child, what have they done to thee ? ”
Know'st thou it well ?

'Tis there, 'tis there,
O my commander, I with thee would fare !

Know'st thou the hill and pathway to the clouds ?
The mule must pick its way, which mist enshrouds ;
In caverns dwells the dragon's ancient brood ;
Down falls the rock, and o'er it leaps the flood.
Know'st thou it well ?

'Tis there, 'tis there
Our pathway leads ! Commander, let us fare !

AMONG the songs which Mignon sung Wilhelm had noticed one, whose melody and expression especially pleased him, although he could not understand all the words. He asked her for it and made her explain it, noted it down and translated it into the German tongue, or rather imitated it, as we now present it to our readers. True, the childish innocence of expression was lost with its broken language, and the charm of the melody could be compared with nothing else. She began each verse with

solemnity, with a sort of pomp, as though she wished to call attention to something wonderful, to relate something important. With the third and fourth lines the song became fainter and more gloomy. The words : " Know'st thou it well ? " were spoken mysteriously and dubiously ; and in the " 'Tis there, 'tis there " lay an irresistible yearning ; while every time she sang the words : " Commander, let us fare ! " she knew how to modify them so that they were by turns imploring, urging, compelling, abrupt or full of promise.

Once, after repeating the song, she paused a moment at the end, looked sharply at her master and asked. " Know'st thou the land ? " " Italy must surely be meant," answered Wilhelm. " Where did you get that song from ? "

" Italy ! " responded Mignon ; " if you go to Italy, take me with you, for here I freeze."

" Have you ever been in Italy, little one ? " asked Wilhelm. The child was silent and nothing more could be extracted from her.

Yet I hardly know why we trouble ourselves about the little creature at a time when we have left our hero in so critical a situation.

There will be scarcely one among our readers who does not wish to know how it fared with Wilhelm at the theatre, and yet hardly any who could not better imagine it than we can describe it. We first meet him again in his own room, thoughtful and undressed.

He sat gazing on the ground, sunk in deep meditation and, but for the half-boots, which they had forgotten to unfasten, would have regarded the whole adventure as a dream. Even now the loud clapping, the deafening applause rang in his ears ; he still felt the movement pass from stall to stall at the finer and more powerful passages, and experienced on this first attempt what he had ever imagined as the rapture of the master. He fully enjoyed the delicious sensation of being the central point on which a mass of assembled men fixed their attention, and, if we may speak in parables, of being like the keystone of a great arch, on which, without overburdening it, a thousand

stones press ; which, without toil or violence, holds them together by its very position, whereas without it they would crash down into confusion and ruin. Even now that the piece was over, his imagination would not permit them to separate, and, at least in spirit, he still held them together feeling convinced that each one at home would experience among his own and in his own the after-glow of the drama's noble deeds and living impressions. He had ordered nothing to eat for the evening, had for the first time sent Mignon away unnoticed, and never thought of retiring to bed until his candle burned out and compelled him. Next morning, after refreshing himself by a long sleep, he arose like one awakening from a drinking bout. The remains of the rouge on his cheeks, and his hair still hanging in wonderful curls, revived the conditions of yesterday, and had a curious effect upon his now sober spirit.

It was not long before Mr. Melina entered, to whose visits, especially at so early an hour, he was unaccustomed. "My wife sends greetings," said he, "and if I could be jealous, I could not help being so this time, for she behaves like a fool about you and your yesterday's playing."

"I thank her," replied Wilhelm, "if she is satisfied with me ; but I can assure you that I have no idea how I played, and this you will easily believe. But I seem to remember that they all did their work very well, for which I remain their debtors."

"Well, well, more or less," said Mr. Melina.

They conversed further about the play, the presentation and effect of its various scenes. Finally Melina said : "Permit me as a friend to remind you of something, for I fear you have forgotten a very important matter. The applause of the public is very nice and good ; only I wish that you might profit by it as you deserve. Yesterday's receipts were pretty considerable, and the directress must have a respectable pile of thalers in her cash-box. Do not neglect this conjuncture to come by your own again ; for I have made a calculation of how much you have partly lent and partly expended on the equipment of the play. During the last two days you have ordered a good deal to

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

be supplied or done in haste, the accounts for which will also fall upon your neck. And, so far as I know, you have not yet paid the landlord anything, who will make you a pretty big bill, and I should not like you to run into embarrassment."

It was an unpleasant shock to our friend to behold this chasm of domestic anxiety suddenly yawning before him right across the agreeable pathway of his intellectual enjoyment. "I will count up my money," said he, "when the bills come in, will pay them and also find occasion of speaking with the directress."

"My friend," cried Mr. Melina, "bethink what you do, and seize the present occasion! It must be done now, on the spot, while Madame de Retti has not yet disbursed the money received, or found an excuse for denying it; I would not guarantee it you until noon."

"She would not think of being so bad," replied Wilhelm, "as to withhold from me my own. Only yesterday at the critical moment she promised to pay me most certainly, and we do her injustice by our suspicions. Perhaps she is even now busy in counting out the money she owes, so as to be free of her liability towards me."

"You must know her very badly," answered Mr. Melina, "or not have observed her previous behaviour. If she had been in good earnest, she might have done her duty long since and paid you off by degrees. In this way you will make nothing of her, and I must insist upon your taking serious measures. Do you know how much you have already expended, or have you made an estimate of what lies before you?"

"I think," said Wilhelm, "that six hundred thalers will about clear it, or say, with the seventy I lent you, it may run to seven hundred. I reckon the host's bill at fifty thalers, and I shall still have so much left over that I cannot possibly fall into difficulties"

"You do not seem to keep very careful account of your cash," said the other. "I bet you have already spent eight hundred thalers since you have been here. Just look, I beg of you, and excuse me for being so persistent."

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

With some unwillingness Wilhelm went to his trunk, and was amazed to find his friend's estimate correct, and his rolls of coin melted to much smaller compass than he imagined. "You are right," he said; "yet I am not at all anxious."

"It would be unbecoming in me," replied the other, "to enquire how much you have left; only this I must say, prepare yourself for a bill of a hundred thalers for workmen's labour, and for an account from the host for at least two hundred thalers."

"Impossible!" cried Wilhelm.

"Excuse my curiosity," answered the other, "its intention was praiseworthy; but yesterday I got the host to show me his book, and find that it has really reached this amount. Your hospitality and generosity have been such that it could not well be less."

A balance was soon struck, from which it was clear that, after settling these bills, scarcely a hundred thalers would be left of Wilhelm's ready cash. He was alarmed, and Melina urged him more strongly. "You see there is no room for jesting," said he. "We have the directress in our hands, for everything she has and owns is assigned to you as security, and we can take possession at once. Rather than see herself ruined and driven out of the town, she will certainly do her utmost, and you will come by your own. Insist upon the first capital sum being immediately repaid and the remainder in instalments from the receipts. Make her also undertake payment of the outstanding workmen's accounts, and thus rescue as much as possible; for you will not escape quite unplucked. Get dressed, I beg of you, and go across to her. If I were not afraid of falling out with her, or of seeming intrusive, I would gladly spare you this disagreeable errand."

No young prince who, booted and spurred, stands waiting to go a-hunting, could give audience more unwillingly to a remonstrating finance minister than Wilhelm at this moment followed his friend's advice. How differently he had thought to spend this morning! He hoped to enjoy himself with his friends, both male and female, with them

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

to renew and to revel in the adventure, the pleasure, the applause of yesterday.

CHAPTER II

SCARCELY was Wilhelm dressed and ready to go over to the directress than he received a note from his friend Herr von C. praising yesterday's play and his unsuspected gift of acting with all the animation of enthusiasm and astonishment, and at the same time inviting him for the evening. He wished to introduce him to a couple of excellent ladies who had driven into town from their estate to see his tragedy, and were very anxious to make his closer acquaintance. He replied verbally that he would be pleased to come, and then went to Madame de Retti's chamber.

Before he reached the door he could hear that she was engaged in violent altercation, and speedily recognised the voice of Mr. Bendel, who was retorting with much incivility. She did not hear Wilhelm's knock, and on opening the door he distinctly overheard the vulgar fellow's words exclaiming: "Enough, there was no need for such hurry; you might have given another play, and to-morrow I could have acted myself."

The arrival of a third party interrupted his vehemence. Wilhelm saluted and expressed pleasure to see him well again; to which the boor merely growled a few unintelligible words of reply, picked up a little box from the table, tucked it under his arm and went out, banging the door after him.

"I wish," said Madame de Retti, "that you had undertaken this part from the very beginning, and that Monsieur Bendel had never learned it. Now he is vexed that you have played it before him."

"He will have time enough to play it after me," replied Wilhelm. "I have already lingered too long. Business calls me to proceed further, and I am come to tell you this, and to request that you will kindly reimburse the money

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

with which I was pleased to assist you, especially as yesterday's receipts will almost suffice for its repayment."

"I do not know myself as yet," replied the directress, "how much was taken, and have just given Mr. Bendel the cash-box to sort and count the money. Towards evening I shall be able to render you an account."

"Madame," answered Wilhelm, "I should be glad if you would have the cash-box brought back. I offer to do the work myself, and in an hour all shall be finished."

"You must not press me just for the moment," replied the directress. "I owe our landlord a considerable bill, and if I would have further credit from him must pay this off at once."

"Remember, Madame," said Wilhelm, "that my debt is not less urgent, for I cannot remain here a single day longer."

"I would on no account ask you to do such a thing," said Madame. "Leave me your address, and I will send it after you on the first opportunity."

"To this I cannot consent," he interrupted; "remember, please, that the entire wardrobe and decorations, with all that belongs to the theatre, have been pledged to me as security, and I should regret it very much, if you compel me to exercise my right."

"Would you be capable," cried Madame de Retti with great impetuosity, flinging on the table a roll of paper which she had hitherto carried in her hand, and walking up and down the room, "would you be capable of being so hard and unjust towards me?"

"I see nothing improper," retorted Wilhelm, "in seeking to get back that which is mine."

"No," she exclaimed, striking her hand against her forehead, "no, I never thought to undergo anything like this! How greatly I have been mistaken in you! how sorely have I misjudged! I would never forgive you as long as I live!"

She continued to display the liveliest annoyance, grumbling at his conduct and giving him to feel how mortified she was at his demand. Wilhelm stood there

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

quite amazed, for to his own mind he was the offended party ; it was *he* who had to complain, *he* who had to forgive ! And he could not help wondering at himself, as he strove to pacify Madame, and assured her that it was not at all his intention to anger her or to cause her embarrassment.

“ That you may see I am in earnest,” she proceeded, “ I will make a beginning with a payment on account, and will give you twenty-five thalers from yesterday’s receipts, and an equal sum from each succeeding performance until capital and interest are extinguished. For you must not think,” she added in a haughty tone, “ that I willingly remain anybody’s debtor.”

Our good friend was dumbfounded and ashamed. He had never learned to look after his own advantage ; forgot therefore Mr. Melina’s good counsel, the empty space in his own cash-box, and let matters rest with her proposal, without either accepting or refusing it. And Madame de Retti was prudent enough, as soon as he retired to his room, to send after him at once the promised sum on account.

Mr. Melina, to whom Wilhelm, though very unwillingly, reported the result of the matter, was highly displeased at his complaisance and negligence, and especially that, having consented to take an advance on account, he had not insisted on a larger sum, and referred the outstanding workmen’s claims to her. Madame Melina, who could hardly express a hundredth part of the agreeable things she had prepared for her theatrical friend, quite lost her temper over her husband’s discontent, because her finest thoughts had to make way for economical disquisitions, while Mr. Melina studied every possible plan for giving the affair another turn ; but Wilhelm could not be induced to tackle the enraged directress again.

As they had foreseen, several workmen came after dinner desiring to be paid. On Mr. Melina’s advice they were sent to the directress, who, however, dismissed them with protest, saying she had ordered none of these things, and they must apply to the gentleman who had given the

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

orders. With this hint they came back, when Wilhelm begged them to have patience until the next morning, when he would make everything right.

In the evening he went to his friend, who introduced him to a very agreeable company. Everybody, and particularly two ladies of excellent qualities, took great interest in him and could not sufficiently extol the delight he had given them yesterday and for a long time to come. Much was spoken about the play; they went through it scene by scene, and declared themselves highly pleased with the harmony of the decorations and costumes. In fact not even the green carpet was forgotten, and Wilhelm might have been very well satisfied, had not all these lauded objects reminded him of the embarrassment already experienced to-day on their account, and which to-morrow would become much more serious. Thus was the delicious enjoyment prepared for him snatched away from his lips by the evil spirit of care.

CHAPTER III

MEANWHILE, the public had looked forward with great expectancy to the following day, on which the company promised to repeat the tragedy. And this time also the tent might well have been much bigger, so as to contain the crowd of importunate spectators. For nobody in the town doubted that the new actor would again show himself in the rôle of Darius, although Wilhelm had quite settled in his heart that he would never again tread the boards, and Monsieur Bendel had already had the hero's dress enlarged and fitted to his own body as at first. The directress took the prudent precaution not to let the names of the acting players appear on the playbills as was usual, whereby curiosity was stimulated, and everybody confirmed in his supposition.

For Wilhelm it was a dreary day. He had to submit to hear Madame Melina complain beforehand how badly the piece would go to-night, and to listen to anxious reproaches

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

from her husband for not having followed his good advice and taken sharper measures to ensure repayment of his money by the directress. He grew so annoyed over this that he heartily wished he had never entered the place. He scolded himself for not having tried to obtain the money early this morning from the directress in one sum, so that he could follow the impulse of his heart, and leave the town that night. He could not persuade himself to visit the theatre, for his bowels turned beforehand at the thought of that uncouth monster stumbling over his words, and by his discords and grimaces destroying every sensation of harmony for the audience. He therefore remained quietly in his room all the evening, while the others were preparing and departing, in order to settle with the host and pay his bill.

Scarcely was everything quiet in the house than Mignon appeared with a lighted candle, much to Wilhelm's surprise, for it was still broad daylight. He had no time to ask the reason, for the child closed the shutters, so that the room became quite dark, and then went quickly out again. In a few moments the door opened once more and the child re-entered. She carried a carpet under her arm, which she spread on the floor. Wilhelm permitted her to proceed. Then she brought four candles, placing them at each corner. A small basket of eggs which she fetched made her purpose clearer. With accurately measured steps she paced to and fro on the carpet, and placed the eggs at certain distances from each other, then summoned a man belonging to the troupe, who played the violin. He posted himself with his instrument in one corner, while she bandaged her eyes, gave the signal, and began to move like a wound-up clock in time with the music, whose beat and melody she accompanied with the rattle of castanets. Nimble, lightly, rapidly and with precision she executed the dance. She stepped so truly, so surely, between the eggs and beside the eggs that it seemed every moment she must infallibly trample one, or sweep them away in her rapid movements. But no! She never touched a single one, though she picked her way through them with all

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

kinds of step, both short and long, even indeed with leaps, and at last almost upon her knees.

Unresting as a clock, she continued her way, while the singular music lent fresh impetus to each repetition of the dance, which she recommenced and executed several times. Wilhelm was quite carried away by the singular spectacle, forgot his cares in following every movement of the dear little creature, and was astonished to observe how finely her character developed during its evolutions. Exact, keen, frigid, in more tender attitudes she was solemn rather than agreeable. All that he had hitherto felt for Mignon seemed reawakened in this moment. He longed in his heart to adopt this forsaken being as his own child, to clasp her in his arms and by a father's love arouse the joy of life in her bosom.

The dance being ended, she gently rolled the eggs together with her feet, leaving none behind and damaging none, then standing beside them removed the bandage and concluded her performance with a reverence.

Wilhelm thanked her for having so kindly and unexpectedly allowed him to witness a dance which he had long desired to see, stroked her head and regretted that she had made herself so warm and tired, promising to give her a new frock. To this she eagerly answered: "Of your colour!" and, on his consenting, picked up her eggs, took the carpet and enquired if he had any further orders, as she was going to the theatre. From the musician he learned that for some time past she had taken much pains to sing the melody to him until he could play it, and had offered him money for his trouble, which, however, he would not take.

CHAPTER IV

SHORTLY after this the host, whom Wilhelm had summoned, entered and handed in the bill asked for. Had Wilhelm not been forewarned by Mr. Melina, he would have been greatly startled by its amount; for he found

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

in fact that he owed over two hundred thalers. There was indeed nothing to object to the several items, which he found on examination to be all correct, and the host assured him he had charged as little as possible. He paid the bill with exception of a small allowance, and thereby reduced his ready cash to very small dimensions. So much the more effusive was the landlord's gratitude, who was just departing when Mignon rushed in at the door crying: "Come, master, come! they are being killed!" The child seized him by the hand and dragged him with her. He asked what was the matter, but she was so out of breath and seemed to have run so fast that she could utter nothing. She drew him out to the landing and to the window, where she pointed down the street leading to the theatre, crying: "There! there!"

He saw what appeared to be some disturbance in the street, but, as it was already growing dusk, could not quite make out what it was. In a moment or two a whole crowd came at full speed and with loud shouts towards the hotel. Wilhelm speedily perceived that a number of wild and unmannerly lads were chasing a man, who in some ridiculous garb was trying to escape and to reach the great gateway. At a glance Wilhelm recognised that the hunted man was Monsieur Bengel (*sic*) himself.

Our friend started back with amazement. But he had no time to recover, for the other hurried up the steps and ran breathless to meet him. "For God's sake, what has happened?" exclaimed Wilhelm in utmost seriousness and alarm, even forgetting to laugh at the singular object before him. For the big, broad monster, rendered yet broader and more ungainly by the hero-costume to which he could not accommodate himself, had flung a short black mantle about him, usually worn by Crispin, which in his terror he had seized in order to conceal in some measure his splendid figure. The helmet, whose straps had come loose, had fallen backward during his flight and now bumped his shoulders. On his lower extremities the splendid boots and apron could be seen gleaming, while

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

his great foolish face was smeared with blood and dirt, and twitched with alternate spasms of anger, fear and silliness.

"For God's sake, tell me what has happened!" cried Wilhelm.

"They shall pay dearly for this!" stammered the other. His face glowed, his eyes stood out from his head, his bosom heaved, and it seemed as though he would burst. The lads meanwhile had also run up the stairs and pressed about him. They screamed, they addressed him as Saint Nicholas, or as Number Nip, the devil of the mountains, and it was only with much trouble that the host got them out through the door.

The dreadful condition in which Wilhelm saw the dishevelled man excited his entire pity. He begged him to become calmer, but he ran like a madman round the room, pulled the mantle still closer about him, and roared so that anyone else would have burst into loud laughter. With convulsive gesticulations he gradually recovered himself, and passed over to a state of vociferous and raving violence, raged against Wilhelm and even threatened him. As the latter displayed all possible moderation and prudence, it seemed as though the blustering lout would fall upon him. Wilhelm therefore lost no time, but springing to the corner, seized a stout stick which he noticed standing there and, by flourishing it a few times through the air, kept the barbarian from his body. The latter, unable to find anything else, gripped the sword hanging at his side and swung it about his head. Luckily its blade was only of silvered wood, which soon flew to pieces on the club wielded by our hero, and the strokes which Wilhelm rained upon him were so rapid and well-aimed that the fury was forced to retire, and, catching his foot on a splinter of the boards, fell full length on the ground just as the host hurried in to separate them, and above all to support his young, kindly and magnanimous guest.

At the same moment a subaltern officer occupied the staircase with some men of the watch, and Wilhelm, hearing how the tumult in the street continued to grow,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

sprang to the window and to his intense amazement beheld the large gates also occupied, while the royal family, whose clothes glittered through the dusk, were arriving under the escort of a number of soldiers, who forced them a way through the crowd. He ran down to meet them; at the bottom of the stairs Madame Melina fell senseless into his arms. They carried her up; and who shall describe the tumult, the figures, the situation, the gesticulations, the exclamations, and, above all, who could express in words the alarm and confusion of our friend, to whom this whole episode was an inexplicable riddle, whose solution he vainly demanded, for every fresh cry, every broken word, only rendered him the more curious and the more uncertain.

CHAPTER V

“UNLESS the commanding officer defends it, they will pull the tent to the ground, and then indeed we shall be ruined!” exclaimed the directress. “My dear Bendel, my best of friends! what have I not had to endure for you!——”

Melina came and privately demanded of Wilhelm the key of his room, he having hitherto been busy about the good Queen, who by degrees had partially recovered. Her husband soon came back and returned Wilhelm his key, when the latter urgently begged him for a reasonable narrative and some explanation of all this turmoil. Melina drew him to the window and answered:

“The house seemed even fuller than the first time. The curiosity and desire to see the piece, and to see it again, were universal, and everyone presumed that you would once more play the part of Darius. When the substituted Darius entered, a general murmuring and whispering arose. Luckily in the first act he had not much to say and no difficult passages. Each one did his best. Madame de Retti acted magnificently and was rewarded with universal applause and hand-clapping.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

But in the last scene of the second act, which made such an impression the previous time, things went all the worse. The whole success of this scene depends on him, on the persistent yet modest tenderness of the hero. I grew uneasy about him myself. Not a single expressive word came from his mouth. A few people in the pit began to stamp; his memory failed him, he stuck fast in the middle of an important sentence, and though the prompter tried to help, yet he hurried on without either sense or understanding with such lines as came into his head. The contrast with our recent performance was too striking. The manner in which you had acted the scene, and the impression then made, were still in every mind, and the stamping grew louder. Fortunately the act came to an end, and the curtain fell. Bendel rushed like a madman out of the theatre, and swore he would never again tread its accursed boards. Madame de Retti did all she could to pacify him, and let them begin the third act. My wife, filled with terror, went on and, without knowing how, spoke and acted the first scene better than ever. Her very timidity commended her to the public, who loudly applauded several passages. The third act, in which this unpleasant fellow does not appear, proceeded; the scene in which all congratulate the King passed off very well, and the audience seemed appeased. Meanwhile Monsieur Bendel also had been pacified. At the beginning of the fourth act the conspirators and the Princess did their very best, but unhappily no alteration had taken place in the interval with Darius. The moment the spectators saw him their displeasure began to manifest itself. He had to describe with some degree of pathos the riotous debauchery of the banquet. Unluckily there are some lines in this part which we had already found ridiculous at rehearsal, owing to the incapacity of his tongue, which confuses the letters L and R. Now, as though some evil genius had struck him with its fist, he continually paused at such places and, thinking he was avoiding these errors, flung them, as though of set purpose, in the face of the audience.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

“They broke into loud laughter; he raised his voice still higher, began to stammer and soon entangled himself in sundry *quid pro quos*. The stamping, whistling, hissing, clapping and shouts of ‘Bravo!’ became universal. The venom and gall which boiled within him now broke out; he forgot where and who he was, stepped right up to the foot-lights, screamed and railed against such conduct, and challenged everyone who treated him with such impertinence. Scarcely had he spoken when an orange came flying and struck him with such violence on the breast that he staggered back several steps; then another and, as he stooped to pick it up, an apple squelched his nose, so that a stream of blood ran down his face. Beside himself with fury, he hurled back into the pit with all his force the apple he had just picked up. Possibly he hit somebody pretty hard, for immediately there arose a general uproar. A boy who carried buns and tarts for sale was completely plundered, and the obnoxious object beplastered with the spoil. Finally, an old snuff-box hurtled through the air, which, breaking against his helmet, filled both eyes and mouth with powdered tobacco. He stamped, foamed, sneezed and spluttered. All the other actors had fled behind the scenes; he alone, by the defiance of his presence, continued to stimulate the anger and laughter of the crowd, and came near being too late in perceiving the danger which threatened him; for a great throng of spectators, armed with sticks, burst through the orchestra and stormed the stage. The directress had the curtain lowered, by which some were crushed and others for the moment shut out. Meanwhile she thrust her favourite, who had flung an old black mantle round him, out by the back door. The greater part of the audience, scared by the tumult, themselves took to flight, and as the exits were closed, most of those in the pit rushed upon the stage. They tore pieces out of the curtains, cut the cords, so that the scenes tumbled down, trampled and smashed everything that came in their way, amid a turmoil and shouting which drowned all the entreaties of the directress and magnified our terror. Yet none of us

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

was injured ; a few sensible people pitied and protected us amid all the tumult, while the more turbulent hunted the theatre through for the object of their wrath, and speedy ruin threatened both us and our whole house. For a mob had gathered outside and now forced its way in ; consisting of that part of the people who take least share in drama because it costs money, or who look upon it as a school of Satan, and believe that arson, famine and pestilence are magnetically attracted by bands such as ours. In their holy zeal, sharpened by the hope of plunder, they quickly knocked in several boards of the walls, and, before anyone was aware, others had climbed to the roof and began to break a way through. Ruin stared us in the face, for we dared not venture into the street, and the house grew every moment more insecure. We had long since sent word to the watch, but the few men on duty were hemmed in by the crowd and could scarcely defend themselves. At last we were rescued by a detachment sent by the commandant as soon as he heard of the disturbance. The officer took us under his protection, and you saw us arrive."

CHAPTER VI

DURING this recital Mr. Melina several times glanced with some disquiet towards the room of the directress, in which, as soon as the first storm was over, she had taken refuge with her favourite. Scarcely had he ended, when she tore open the door and with vehement gestures cried : " We are lost ! we are ruined ! During the tumult someone has robbed me and taken the cash-box out of my room ! What stranger has been up here ? " She inquired the whereabouts of the cash-taker, that he might hand over what had been taken at the door.

" Do not be alarmed, Madame," said Mr. Melina quite calmly. " The cash-box is not far away ; at the very commencement I carried it for safety into our friend's room, and locked it in there securely. To-day's receipts

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

are also with the rest ; I took them from the old man as he met me in the turmoil."

"A very unnecessary precaution !" cried the directress scornfully. "I charge you seriously to bring me the money back again at once."

"My friend," said Melina, "has got the key once more," pointing to Wilhelm, who stood beside him, "and I imagine he will consider it more advisable to retain this treasure at least until to-morrow."

The strife grew more violent ; Melina kept cool, while the directress urgently entreated Wilhelm, who, on a hint from his friend, felt obliged to refuse the key, though, if left to himself, he might perhaps have handed it over. Madame de Retti now began to sling "villain" and other abusive epithets about, and it was quite time that the commanding officer, who had stilled the tumult, should ascend the stairs.

"What ?" he exclaimed, "cannot the rabble keep the peace among themselves ? What's the matter ? Must I keep order here too ?"

Wilhelm was so angered by this mode of address that he was on the point of a rough rejoinder, when Melina, who cherished quite other thoughts, answered him gently and politely : "Sir, I beg you not to think ill of us, but to protect us from the malice and violence of our directress."

"I'll soon put her head straight !" exclaimed he. "What are you thinking of, Madame ?"

Melina gave her no chance of coming to speech, but interposed : "In the confusion I have placed the cash-box in this gentleman's room. lest we all come to misfortune. The directress screams and acts as though it were her own money, of which she had been robbed, while in fact she owes us and this gentleman more than it all amounts to. She has not the smallest ground for complaint, and to-morrow early we will settle the whole business."

As Madame de Retti only retorted with violence and words of abuse, she at once put herself in the wrong with the officer, who bade her hold her peace.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

Melina therefore continued : “ In order that you may see, Sir, that our intentions are strictly honourable, we beg you to post a sentinel at the door, and another at that door where our wardrobe is stored. If you desire to have the keys, they are at your disposal ; or would you rather affix seals ? Anything is right to us which ensures safety and proves that we ask for nothing unreasonable.”

The directress was ready to explode with wrath ; but it helped nothing, the officer took the keys, posted his men and departed to render account of his expedition to the commandant. On the stairs a second officer met him, whom they at once recognised as the general's adjutant. He asked to speak alone with the directress, who conducted him to her room. Everyone waited the result with curiosity, and noted signs of perturbation on her face when he departed. To the others he showed himself friendly, and chatted with them ; but they could learn nothing as to the message he had brought. Each retired to his room, and Wilhelm lodged for this night with the Melinas, where, after having first discussed many matters, he laid him down with puzzled brain and a very anxious heart upon the bed which they had hastily prepared for him in one corner.

CHAPTER VII

IN much confusion and embarrassment he flung his head hither and thither on the pillows, while sleep refused to allay the misery of the situation. The loss of his money, the uneasiness of his own relatives, his ancient longings and present connections all stood vividly before his soul. The opprobrious words of the officer still rang in his ears, and he felt it unbearable to be in such society, although he could not rightly feel himself offended thereby. The dreams of his youth were dispersed like a lovely cloud of mist, floating around some barren mountain peak. He bewailed both himself, the theatre and the poetic art.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

“ Ah ! ” he exclaimed, “ would that all the many foolish youths who run after this will-o'-the-wisp may grow wise from my example, and not allow themselves to be lured by this siren from their appointed path in life ! ” Thus, in an alternation of depressing thoughts he passed several hours, and might well be compared to a warrior unexpectedly surrounded, along with his company, by an enemy. First he ascended a mountain, then reconnoitred a valley, and next looked for rescue by way of the river, and having found the whole circuit encompassed, began to weigh the question of fighting a way through, or of surrender, only to recommence the long process over again.

He heard a rattling sound in front of the house, and concluded that his guests were arriving or departing ; then a carriage clattered, boxes were dragged along, but he could not tell whether upwards or downwards. In the morning Melina, who had risen early and looked after the sentries, came to his bedside and cried : “ Get up, my friend, and examine with me the empty nest ! The birds have flown, and it is lucky for us that we made provision beforehand.”

Wilhelm was astonished and could not quite understand what he meant. In a word, the directress had quietly absconded during this night with her precious Bendel. They now learned that the commandant had advised her, without more ado, to remove the uncouth mortal who had become so obnoxious to the public, as he could not otherwise guarantee her against anything that might happen, and she must be prepared for the mob attacking him on the open street and creating a tumult. After all had gone to rest, she called the host upstairs, informed him of this command and requested post horses and a carriage, that she might accompany Mr. Bendel to the next station and then return. At first he would not believe her, but, on her demand, hurried off to the adjutant, who assured him it was quite true. Thereupon, to show that she was serious, she paid him some money on account towards Mr. Bendel's bill, reminded him of the guarded cash-box and wardrobe, saying it was natural that she would not leave these

behind, especially as she was only taking very little clothing with her.

"My good friend," said Melina, "this time your usual prudence has deserted you, for you will never see her again, and the wardrobe and cash, and whatever else there may be, belong to this gentleman"—pointing to Wilhelm—"as pledge for cash expenditure. But don't be uneasy; we will see how best to extricate ourselves from this fix, and each help the other to bear his loss." There was still a large trunk in her room. Melina affirmed that they ought to break it open, and would find it stuffed with straw and stones; but others thought differently, and they left it standing.

The news spread with dawning day. The actors, who lived partly in the house and partly outside, hurriedly came together. They questioned, advised, suggested, made proposals and rejected them, each one shouted and believed he had found the right solution, yet each had to become silent before the shrill opinion of his neighbour. A few, seeing the hotel still occupied by soldiers, visited the theatre, where they found everything in dreadful confusion. To most of them Madame de Retti still owed their wages. Each asked after the cash-box, after the money, and Melina was hugely delighted that he had at least rescued a portion. He entreated the rest to calm themselves, and to wait and see how matters would be arranged.

He thereupon fetched the notary who had drawn up that letter of assignment to Wilhelm. They locked themselves in and debated, then went to the chief magistrate, and Wilhelm grew as peevish over the annoyance and tediousness of this negotiation, as completely out of temper, as probably our readers would also become, were we to narrate in detail the winding-up of this bankruptcy.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

CHAPTER VIII

THEIR deliberations and plans were suddenly interrupted by the unexpected return of Madame de Retti, who vigorously protested against all that had been done.

Melina, perceiving here a fresh obstacle, was indignant, and when she expressed amazement that they could act so promptly without consideration for her, he replied: "Madame, you cannot expect us to foresee the venture-some steps which your extraordinary spirit may prompt. In the present case surely nobody but yourself would have been capable of risking such a ride, which must inevitably arouse suspicion that you would not come back."

"I forgive you," she answered, "that you cannot sympathise with my heart; that is not everybody's affair."

"And I," retorted Melina, "cannot certainly judge what is due to such an object, or what one is capable of doing for him."

Wilhelm came in just as this strife was becoming bitter, and, as the whole affair had become highly offensive to him, begged Mr. Melina not to excite himself or introduce personalities, but to save as much as possible of the money, and not further increase the embarrassment in which they all found themselves. "I leave the whole matter," he continued, "in your hands, for I am no longer in a condition to think or speak another word about it, nor to protect my own advantage in the least. I beg of you, Madame," said he, "remember how much I lose; be moderate and reasonable and do not multiply obstacles." Madame de Retti began to address him with soft words, but Melina provided that he should soon retire.

To divert his thoughts Wilhelm visited the promenade to look for his friend Herr von C——, but did not find him. The other officers, whom he knew more or less, stared hard at him, gathered around him and then left him standing, so that he felt rather than noticed the strangeness of their demeanour. Enquiring after Herr von C——, they told him with a peculiar tone that he was sick. Wilhelm

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

resolved to visit him, but was turned back from the door. They said the gentleman was asleep, but that his sickness was not serious. He went for a short walk ; but this did not suffice. He wanted to find some sympathetic soul with whom to converse ; and nothing was left but to go to Frau von S——, who herself, and especially one of her sisters, had been active on his behalf. But she also was not at home, and he returned with some impatience to his hotel. There he found Mr. Melina in high spirits, who related the preliminary arrangement he had made, and how he hoped by conciliation to effect a settlement, so that the matter should at least not come before the courts, and they might save the best part of what there was. Wilhelm was impatient, and assured him that he would have nothing more to do with the business. Thereupon he turned to Madame Melina and said : “ I should like to know what is the matter with my friend C——. I hear he is sick, and hope it is nothing serious.”

“ I was just going to ask you,” answered she, “ whether you have visited him, for we hear that he has fought a duel, and that it was about yourself.”

“ What ? ” cried Wilhelm, in consternation, “ how can that be possible ? ”

“ Some people,” she answered, “ are said to have been long jealous of the preference he enjoys in the house of Frau von S——. They have sought all kinds of ways to injure and annoy him. Lately they have criticised his intimate intercourse with an actor, and said it was indecent for him to introduce him into this lady’s house. At this he became very hot, and in the duel which ensued upon this dispute wounded his opponent somewhat severely, though he did not himself escape with a whole skin.”

Madame Melina’s cold words were like a thousand daggers in Wilhelm’s heart. Hiding his feelings as well as possible, he hastened to his chamber, where he gave free course to his annoyance, anguish and lamentation.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

CHAPTER IX

THIS news and the condition to which it reduced him were as overwhelming as Mariana's faithlessness, and as insufferable as the letter from his unworthy rival. For the second time in his life he had felt impelled to follow an innate passion, and been imperceptibly carried along by it, yet now found himself thereby landed in such confusion, in so agonised and anxious a position, so sharply pressed from every side, that he was unable either to resist or to endure the anguish inflicted. "What?" he exclaimed, "must I from my youth up be gently enticed, tempted and guided, in order to fall at last into this snare, which closes so disastrously above me?"

Seizing his pen, he gave free vent to his vehement annoyance in a note to his friend von C——. He begged the good man's forgiveness for having brought him into such a dilemma, and could not find words to express his own culpability and sorrow. The letter was immediately sent off, and the process of retrospection and thought began afresh.

He had never known a grief of this sort; for even the first swift despair and lingering silent regrets of a shipwrecked love have about them something delicious, something seductive. We yield to them willingly; whereas every other sorrow which strikes the soul from outward objects is flung aside, and the sooner the better. Moreover during this time a more manly strain had unnoticed penetrated his soul, though in most things he was still quite a youth. He felt more scorn than grief, and while vividly conscious of his own faults, it was just this consciousness that oppressed him most. In the hope of procuring himself air by voluntary confession, he sat down to write Werner a complete narrative couched in his most earnest language, to confess his follies and beg for forgiveness. He ended his letter with the assurance that he would at once continue his journey, and attend better to the business in hand. He did not conceal how much money had been wasted, but believed that, after all, it would prove to

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

have been well invested, seeing that he had acquired precious experience which would be of service to his life's end.

He felt quite relieved, and like one newly born, when he had shaken this burden from his breast, and although his vexation at the shameful conduct of the public, as this appeared to him, often came back upon his heart, yet he quickly justified himself, made excuses for himself and forgave them everything. And then suddenly the memory invaded him anew; he stamped, he ground his teeth, tears gushed to his eyes; then he quickly grew ashamed and recovered his equanimity.

"Is it possible," said he to himself, "that people can despise a class of men, who are everywhere made welcome, whose talents are praised and encouraged, whose art everyone presses to behold and hear and admire and all with money in their hands? What a contradiction! what nonsense!" Thus excited he walked to and fro, and would perhaps never have been wrested from this condition had not some friend or fortune been able to reach him a helping hand. In sealing up his letter he found with much annoyance that he had used a sheet of paper the last side of which was already written upon. This and the very negligent style of the writing induced him to let the paper lie, that he might copy it afresh with more care next morning. A little later his man of business, Melina, entered. This friend's cheerful face announced something good. "I have talked things over," said he, "with the rest of the company, and we have agreed upon a plan, which, if you consent to it, will give another aspect to our position."

"What are your ideas?" asked Wilhelm.

"They have confidence in me," replied the other, "that I would conduct the management of the theatre with prudence and fidelity. The directress sees very well that she must retire and follow her lover. I would take over the wardrobe on a low valuation, and become your debtor for the same. The wooden building, as we have been informed, can be readily restored, the public may easily

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

be appeased, we hope for favourable results, and desire nothing more earnestly than speedily and entirely to satisfy our noble creditor."

When Wilhelm enquired about the ready money which was yesterday in hand, he heard with regret that it had mostly gone to satisfy the actors, workmen and the landlord. The directress could not quite denude herself, and Wilhelm quickly perceived that, for the present at least, he would receive back very little of the money advanced. He had, however, not reckoned particularly upon it, and only planned and hoped to continue his journey with the little he had left, and thus reach some place where he would not lack either cash or credit.

When on the following morning Wilhelm re-read the letter of yesterday with more calmness and composure, it seemed to him exaggerated and too passionate. "What will Werner think of you," said he, "for having acted so foolishly, and what need is there for you to gossip about your own mischance, or to betray a connection which in the future may be injurious?" The letter, therefore, was not recopied, but, rather, torn up, and he proposed to inform Werner in some more prudent fashion of just what he needed to know. A generous, kindly and intelligent reply from Herr von C—— confirmed him in these thoughts and for the moment consoled him; for his spirit soon began to recapitulate afresh the pain and annoyance, to turn them over and over, so as, if possible, to become their master.

Hitherto Mignon had been quite banished from his mind, much as the child strove, as before, to serve him attentively. As soon as she noticed that Wilhelm was preparing to travel she grew cheerful and extraordinarily active. "Your box is not big," she said, "a mule can easily carry it."

"What, my child?" said Wilhelm.

"When we go over the mountains," answered the little one. From the remoteness of service she had gradually drawn somewhat nearer to him. When she tucked him in at night, or brushed his hair in the morning, it is true

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

she did not do it very skilfully and took longer than he liked to comb out and smooth his hair, yet whenever she noticed a spot or speck of dust, she brushed him most carefully. Sometimes, as he wrote or read, she stood before him, or quietly sat on her stool on the ground. When he glanced at her, he fancied he beheld a glowing coal glimmering amid ashes. Just now she was merry and active, her spirit was in commotion, and she appeared to anticipate some pleasant change. It was evident to Wilhelm that she expected to go with him, a thought which laid a fresh anxiety, like a stone, upon his heart.

CHAPTER X

THE directress had departed without anything being said about Mignon, as to who should keep the child or provide for her. The company was very busy with its new arrangements, and would speedily have completed these had not the movement of the greater world also engulfed this little town. News of the outbreak of war came upon them unexpectedly. The regiment was ordered to hold itself ready to march, everything fell into dire confusion, and the calmer Muses could not withstand the racket. The well-thought-out plan of our new director suddenly crumbled to ruins; for the fact could not be overlooked that, under such circumstances, little was to be earned in a country town, that something else must be devised and some other decision formed, if they were not to be in danger of suffering want. But the worst of all was that the likelihood of the war spreading throughout the greater part of Germany, could easily be foreseen, and that dramatic art would everywhere be exposed to poverty and danger. They knew few companies to which, even under more favourable circumstances, they might turn. Finally they concluded that their best plan would be to go to H——. The situation of this town gave promise of quiet, and its conditions of a good reception for theatrical art.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

The company at present playing there had a good name, and what was more, Wilhelm knew the director and was obliged to go thither on account of business. He could therefore both accompany and recommend his friends, and reap a double pleasure therefrom. As this idea had first occurred to Melina and his wife, it was thought advisable to conceal it from the other actors, in order not to be overladen with too many people, and to enjoy its advantages alone. Wilhelm specially stipulated for this, having no desire to travel with a great company.

While they were busy with their preparations Mademoiselle Philina came to him in his room, a young and cheerful actress whom we have hitherto not mentioned at all, or only in passing. Our friend had often had to endure reproaches from Madame Melina for treating this little, frivolous figure more kindly, and showing her more favour than her behaviour warranted; and it was true also that he regarded her with indulgence and a kind of deference, although he could neither esteem nor like her. From the very earliest times she had lived with incredible levity, carelessly devoting every day and night to joy, as though it had been her first and last. She confessed that she had never felt a fancy for any man, and used to say in jest that men were such a monotonous sex one could scarcely distinguish one from another. Yet she could hardly cast her eyes upon any man without his seeking to win her favour, and there was hardly any man upon whom she did not cast her eyes. She was the best-hearted creature in the world, fond of delicacies, loved gay attire, and could not live without riding about the country or devising some other diversion. Especially charming was she when she had a glass of wine in her head. Whoever could procure her this gratification was welcome, and whenever, which was not often, she had a little spare cash, she readily shared it with any wandering knight who happened to please her tolerably, and whose strength lay not in his purse. In days of plenty nothing seemed good enough for her, yet she was soon after content with anything. To please a generous lover she would wash herself

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

in milk, wine and sweet-smelling waters, while very soon after the common spring did her equal service. She was very liberal to the poor and altogether very soft-hearted, though not to the woes of a lover, when once she had dismissed him. Whatever clothes, ribbons, hoods, hats and such like she discarded, she usually threw out of the window. Her whole demeanour had something childlike and innocent, which lent her fresh charms in the eyes of every newcomer. All women were hostile towards her, and with good right. Moreover she associated with none, and employed in her service first an old adventurer, and then a youthful beginner.

The reader will know her sufficiently well from this outline, so that we need not pile up further details, and return therefore to our friend's amazement at this visit, for she had seldom been to see him, and never alone. She did not leave him long in uncertainty, but rather gave him to see that the projected journey had been betrayed to her. She insisted upon going with them, and revealed herself as so well-bred, so flattering, so eager, that Wilhelm could not refuse her, at least not for the moment.

When Wilhelm, though with some reluctance, informed Madame Melina of this, it gave rise to various debates. But ere long the project became more widely known, and several others urged their claims, each firmly convinced that the company could not fail of a better reception if he were among its members. Having once given consent to a few and resolved to engage another coach, a third carriage was also soon required. Others would cover the way on horseback, and at last the box-seats themselves were bespoken. Mr. Melina and his friend were considered the leaders of this caravan, and the company set out on its travels.

CHAPTER XI

MANY of our readers, who at the end of the last chapter were rejoicing that we had finally changed the scene, will

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

be perhaps indignant if we return thither once more to mention several matters which occurred before the departure.

Wilhelm's first interview with Herr von C—— after his mishap, and which he had much dreaded, passed off easily and without offence, and to the regret of both friends, now proved to be their last. Nothing was said of what had occurred. "My good friend," exclaimed Herr von C—— as soon as he saw him, "you see me on the point of hastening to a scene of action where serious plays are produced, where each man only acts his part once, and whence no one who has ended his fifth act can ever return."

"You make a great mistake, Sir," answered Wilhelm, "in comparing the vast spaciousness of these free and manly deeds to the narrow limits of our childish games! How happy are you, whom Fortune conducts to places where the whole man can put forth his best powers, where all that he has become during life and for which he has trained himself, can in a single moment become effective and manifest itself in its highest glory. How I look forward to rejoicing in my narrower circle when Fame shall carry your name to my ears, and assure me at the same time that fortune has fought on the same side as merit!"

"I expect, my friend," replied Herr von C——, "that my career will have a much quieter and more insignificant end, and am well content that it should be so. You are perhaps right in not permitting me to compare what we encounter, what we undertake, to a tragedy, for it is really far more serious, and the smallest thing that happens can be seen. The dear, good, idle spectator views the perilous tumult from afar, in which, as in the common world, the noblest deeds are wrought for oblivion, wrought in secret or beneath the cover of night, of smoke and dust; while the few, favoured by unreasonable fortune, gather up and carry away the glory which belongs to the many. It is a game of chance; and you know, my friend, how little distinction this makes between

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

noble and ignoble men, between the intelligent and fools, between the valiant and the cowardly."

"What," cried Wilhelm, "and your whole soul does not glow to distinguish yourself; you are not carried away by impetuous ambition to leave your deeds, your name, as a pattern for the after-world?"

"By no means, friend," answered the other, "I am accustomed to do my duty in my calling and at the place where I am set. I shall continue to do my duty, and calmly await the rest. If thereby I go before the officers and soldiers of my company with such an example that they can perform the work assigned them with more firmness, courage and sureness, and if I fall like a brave man, and none but these know it, or at least that my regiment be informed of it, I shall have done more than many a man whose name, through some chance, of no advantage to his people, is proclaimed in all the newspapers. Believe me, Fame is an impotent goddess, as fickle as the wind, and follows hard after Chance. We assign her a hundred tongues, but if we multiplied them to millions, she would not be able to proclaim a millionth part of the good which is daily performed in secret among all classes of men; and if she announced it all, who would pay attention? To her distracted vision only the coarsest favouritisms of fortune, only the harshest assaults of evil are perceptible; and what advantage has the hero over others, that he should become the most famous among the famous? None beyond what the basest of the mob can see and comprehend—he has put his enemy to flight, or trodden him under foot. Possibly another, perhaps even the same man, has at other times overcome far more dangerous foes, has exhibited more greatness of spirit, more strength of soul, more heroism; yet who observed it, or was capable of observing it?"

"You know the world longer and better than I do," answered Wilhelm, "and I myself have no reason to expect the best from it. Yet what you say is so entirely contrary to all the ideas of youth, and to all our desires, that I cannot quite resign myself to give it my assent, but

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

am rather inclined to assign a larger share therein to a certain hypochondriac quality of your character than may perhaps be due thereto."

Herr von C—— smiled and replied : " I should not like to infect you, and our time is too short to discuss the matter thoroughly. Only one thing I would ask you as a dramatic writer to note, and this you may accept as a rule, though indeed we have long been at one on the point : Learn from this that one should only employ for the public clearly visible, strong, homely and well defined characteristics ; that the finer, more intimate and more cordial produce less effect than one imagines, especially when one would make an impression on the multitude, which in the end it always is that pays."

At this point they were obliged to part, saw each other again some days later for a few words, and then disappeared from each other's ken without ever really saying goodbye.

CHAPTER XII

WILHELM sat in the same carriage with Mignon, Mrs. Melina and her husband. As the latter could not well endure driving, he soon had to get out and beg a horse from someone. The sharp-witted Philina soon noted this change, and begged for the vacant place, which they could not well refuse, and she had scarcely been admitted than she began in her usual way to make up to Wilhelm, the solitary man in the company, and soon managed to attract his attention. She sang several songs very prettily, and they discoursed on all kinds of subjects suitable for dramatic handling. This favourite topic brought the young poet into the best of humours, and out of the wealth of his living store of images, he composed a whole play for them, with its several acts and scenes, its sub-divisions, characters and complications, yea, even the decoration was not forgotten. It was thought well to interweave a few airs and songs ; they composed the poetry on the spot, and

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

Philina, who entered into everything, fitted them at once to well-known melodies and sang them off-hand. Wilhelm, in his merriest and happiest humour, continued the game, now seriously, now in jest, and almost forgot his graver lady friend and his darling child in lively intercourse with the light-hearted creature. Philina had to-day one of her good days, a very good day, and knew how to entertain him with all sorts of raillery, so that he felt more contented than he had done for many a long day.

After several days' travelling they reached a small place where they were compelled to remain quietly, because the district was not safe, and the neighbourhood overrun with bands of free corps. Against their will they had to herd together in an hotel. Several had to share one room as well as they could, only Philina, who had conspired with our hero, made shift with a little closet on the upper landing, so as to be alone and undisturbed.

On Madame Melina's suggestion Wilhelm had taken possession of a nice room opening on the stairs. Ever since that cruel discovery tore him from the arms of Mariana he had taken an oath to guard against this heart-breaking snare, to avoid the faithless sex and shut up his pangs, his inclinations, his sweet longings within his own breast. The conscientiousness with which he had observed his vow supplied an inward secret nourishment to his whole nature, and as his heart could not remain without sympathy, some interchange of loving thought became a painful necessity to his whole being. He went about as though encompassed by his first youthful haze, his eyes dwelt with joy on every charming object, and never had his judgement on an amiable figure been more tolerant. How dangerous to him in such a situation was this wayward girl can be easily understood, and we surely need not say any more to excuse somewhat to our lady readers the sort of fancy which, all unconsciously, he began to feel for her, being assured that the men have long since pronounced his absolution.

Hardly were they arrived and in some degree settled, than, during a walk, Madame Melina took him seriously to

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

task respecting these sentiments, which as yet he had not noticed in himself. He swore vehemently, and could well swear, that nothing was further from his thoughts than to attach himself to this girl, with whose entire conduct he was so familiar. Therefore, as well as he could he tried to excuse his friendly and civil behaviour towards her, though without in any way satisfying Madame Melina.

On returning home they found her husband also in the worst of humours. He had enquired high and low to see whether there were any chance of continuing their journey; everybody had dissuaded him with the best of reasons. The armies were not very far apart, and a battle might be expected in the very district they wished to traverse, and there was nothing for them but to remain, a necessity almost as dangerous as to proceed.

The general fund, which Mr. Melina administered, and which consisted really of the rescued gleanings of Wilhelm's cash, began more and more to reveal the bottom of the box, for out of it their travelling expenses and the maintenance of a part of the company had to be met. Others, who had a little left and had undertaken to board themselves, lived carelessly, and beginning soon to feel the pinch of need, came where they thought there was still some money, borrowed and wanted to borrow.

"We shall soon have to go a-begging!" cried Melina.

"Don't be discouraged," replied Wilhelm. "A way will soon show itself."

"If only we were alone and had not weighted ourselves with the burden of so many people!" cried the other.

"My last farthing is at your disposal," answered Wilhelm. "As long as we are together I will have nothing of my own."

"We shall only hunger a few days later," said Melina, "and who will then deliver us out of this nest?" To this the other knew not what to reply.

At table Melina vented his bad temper also upon the rest, for they ate together, and was only interrupted by the enquiry of the host, who announced a harper. "You will be sure," said he, "to enjoy his music and his songs. No

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

one who has heard him can help admiring him and giving him a trifle."

"Send him away," answered Melina. "I am not in the humour to listen to a hurdy-gurdy; and besides we have singers among ourselves who would gladly earn something." These words he accompanied with a spiteful side-glance at Philina.

She quite understood its meaning and was inwardly vexed, but, not to betray her annoyance, turned to Wilhelm: "Ought we not to hear the man?" said she. "We shall surely perish of ennui, and I for one will gladly give something."

Wilhelm was on the point of responding, and the strife would soon have become general, had he not at the moment risen to greet the man as he entered, and to bid him come forward. The figure of this singular guest filled the whole company with astonishment, and he had already taken a seat before anyone had the heart to question him or raise objection. A bald crown, surrounded by a few grey hairs, large blue eyes, which looked out from beneath long white eyebrows, a well-formed nose, to which was adjoined a white and moderate beard, all presented a strange vision to the company. A long, dark-coloured garment covered his slender body from the neck to the feet. Taking up his harp, he commenced a prelude. The agreeable tones which he extracted from his instrument, the cheerful, tender melodies which rang from its strings soon put the company into the best of humours.

"You sing as well, old man!" said Philina.

"Give us something to delight our minds," said Wilhelm; "for as I am no judge of music, these melodies, runs and flourishes are to my ear only what so many gay paper-cuttings and waving feathers, driven along by the wind, would be to my eye; whereas song soars alive into the air, like a butterfly or a lovely bird, and stirs both heart and soul to soar with it."

The old man looked at Wilhelm, then towards heaven, struck a few notes from the harp and began his song. Its subject was the praise of song; it extolled the bliss of

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

the singer and charged men to pay him honour. He delivered it with much life and truth, so that it seemed as though he had that very moment composed it for this occasion, and Wilhelm could scarcely restrain from falling on his neck; nothing but shyness in presence of the company kept him on his seat. He feared to provoke loud laughter by embracing a stranger with rapture. Among the rest opinions were divided as to whether the man were a parson or a Jew. They enquired eagerly as to the author of the song, to which he gave no definite answer, but assured them he had many more of the sort, and hoped that they might please the company. They had grown cheerful and merry, chattered among themselves and jested, whereon he began most wittily to sing the praise of life. With seductive tones he extolled concord and social courtesy; while, as he sang of hateful reserve, short-sighted enmity and perilous discord, his song grew cold, harsh and discordant, so that every heart was glad to cast off these oppressive husks when, borne aloft on the pinions of a penetrating melody, he sang the glory of the peacemaker and the bliss of souls restored to each other's love.

Wilhelm felt like one newly born. Without being conscious of it, his unpleasant situation had limed him feather by feather, and so ensnared and restricted him that, without rightly knowing or understanding how, he felt himself captive. But now the spirit of this old man had enkindled his soul afresh. It seemed as though a storm of wind had scattered every cloud, and just as the first gleam of sunshine after a long period of gloomy weather suddenly restores a whole countryside to the ancient rights of lovely days, so was it in his heart, which seemed blest once more by unencumbered freedom. He lost sight of where and who he was, every object grew ennobled before him, and, seized once more by his former happy folly, he exclaimed: "Whoever you be, who come to us as a helpful guardian spirit, with blessing and quickening voice, accept my homage and my thanks! Be assured that we all admire you, and trust in us if ever you be in want!"

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

The old man kept silence, let his fingers glide over the strings, smote them more sharply and sang :

“ ‘What is it from the bridge I hear,
Before the portal sounding?
The song repeat within our ear,
Through lofty halls rebounding!’
Thus speaks the King; the page-boy flies;
The boy returns, the King replies:
‘Quick! bring the old man hither!’

“ ‘My greeting to each noble lord,
My homage, dames, I render!
Celestial glories! orb on orb!
Who tells your peerless splendour?
’Mid such array of pomp sublime
Shut eyelids; for is here no time
In wonderment to revel.’

“The minstrel closing then his eye,
The ringing note upraises:
Thrills every knight with courage high,
To earth each beauty gazes.
The King, enraptured with the lay,
Bids fetch, in honour of his play,
A golden chain as guerdon.

“ ‘To me give thou no chain of gold;
The chain give to the knightly,
Before whose countenances bold
Foes’ lances splinter lightly.
Or give it to thy Chancellor there,
That he the golden burden bear,
To add to other burdens.

“ ‘I sing as larks and thrushes sing,
Where trees wear verdant raiment;
The songs which from my bosom ring
For me are ample payment;
Yet, if I may, one boon I’d ask:
A draught of wine from eldest cask,
In golden goblet sparkling.’

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

“He raised it up, he drain’d it dry :
‘O draught of sweetest savour !
Happy the house, exalted high,
Where such a cup’s small favour !
If well ye fare, remember me,
And give God thanks as heartily
As for this drink I thank ye.’”

CHAPTER XIII

WHEN the minstrel, having finished his song, seized a glass of wine which stood ready for him, turned with friendly countenance towards his benefactors and drank it up, there arose a general rejoicing in the company. They clapped and cried out a hope that this glass might prove to his health and the strengthening of his ancient limbs ! He then sang them a few romances, and stirred the company to still further hilarity.

“Do you know the song, old man,” cried Philina :
“‘The shepherd deck’d himself for dance ?’”

“I used to manage it once,” said he, “but do not know it now. Will you act the shepherdess ?”

“With all my heart,” she exclaimed. “I have long wanted to find someone with whom I could sing it again. Only do not get mixed up in the comical rolling syllables of the refrain.” She stood up and jokingly seated herself beside him on the ground.

As the song is far from being reputable, we cannot give it to our readers, and as it really ought to be sung by a pair of gesticulating dancers, it lost something of its force in this rendering. Nevertheless, it was greeted with the utmost applause, and the smart, humorous tricks, the skilful turns and pretty gestures with which Philina brought out the equivocal situations, while appearing to wish to hide them, found favour with all, and even in Wilhelm’s eyes. The company was quite enraptured ;

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

but as our friend had long been familiar with the evil consequences of their merriment, he endeavoured to break up, pressed something into the old man's hand for his trouble, to which the others added something; they then bade him go to rest, promising themselves renewed pleasure from his skill for the next evening.

When he had gone, Wilhelm said to Philina: "I cannot exactly commend the morality of your love-song; but if you had only produced something agreeable and proper on the stage with the same naïveté, you would have excited admiration and risen to the first rank of actresses. Truly this man puts us all to shame! Did you notice how correct was the dramatic expression of his romances? Truly there is more impersonation in his singing than in our people on the stage. One might consider the presentation of many plays as mere narrative, and attribute to his poetic narratives a sentient presence."

"He shamed us also in another point," cried Melina, as the rest remained silent, "and indeed a most important point; the excellence of his talent shows itself in the profit he extracts from it. He has moved us, who in eight days will perhaps not know where to turn for a meal, to share our meal with him. With a simple song he knows how to tempt from our pockets the money we so greatly need to reach the place of our destination. I have contributed a few groschen myself with a mixture of pleasure and reluctance; but, by heaven! I mean to win this fee—and you will not be offended with me—to win it back again with interest out of others."

"We are heartily agreed!" cried some; "we will help you if you will find us a chance."

"Chances we may find everywhere," said Melina, "only one must not be too particular. In the townhall here there is a large ante-chamber, on which I was speculating this morning early. If the fire-bucket were only hung out of the way, and a few old fittings and partitions put on one side, there would be room enough for stage and pit. I have looked out the hooks and beams upon which a troupe of rope dancers last year hung their cords and curtains."

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

"You surely would not try to catch the public here with such rubbish for the sake of a few pfennige?" said Wilhelm.

"With your permission I certainly shall!" answered Melina impetuously, "for we cannot play the magnanimous fool for ever, and like young dandies consume both our capital and interest!"

Our friend felt the words stick in his mouth, for in these unthankful reproaches he heard himself and his generosity sorely wounded, after having been drawn upon to support this entire crew for half a year. He viewed the mean-spirited director with contemptuous eyes and cried to him, as he opened the door: "Do what you like; I will seek means to proceed on my journey as soon as possible, and leave you to your own wisdom."

Having said it, he hastened downstairs and seated himself on a stone bench which stood before the door.

Scarcely had he taken his seat, oppressed with moody thoughts, than Philina sauntered singing out by the door and sat down by—one might almost say upon—him, so close did she come, leaned upon his shoulder, toyed with his curls, stroked him, and spoke the softest words imaginable: "He must stay and not forsake her so soon."

Finally, when he tried to put her off, she flung her arm around his neck and kissed him with all the fondness of desire.

"Are you mad, Philina?" said Wilhelm, trying to break loose, "to make a public street the scene of such caresses, which I in no sense deserve? Let me go! I cannot and will not stay."

"And I will hold you fast," said she, "and will keep on kissing you here on the open street until you promise me. I could kill myself with laughing," she continued. "After all this intimacy folks will certainly consider me your wife, and every married man who sees or hears of so charming a scene will praise me to his own wife as a pattern of childlike and simple tenderness." As a few people happened to be passing, she caressed him with increased ardour, and he,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

in order to provoke no scandal, was compelled to act the long-suffering husband.

As soon as the people had moved a little way on she burst into unrestrained laughter, and then, out of sheer wantonness, committed all kinds of frolicsome improprieties. At last he was obliged to promise to remain to-day, to-morrow and even a third day.

"You are a regular stick!" she thereupon exclaimed, giving him a push and quitting his side. "Truly I have never had to expend so much tenderness in vain upon the oldest and hardest." She rose with some reluctance, and moved laughing towards the house. "I believe this is just why I am so infatuated about you," she exclaimed. "I will go and fetch my knitting, that I may have something to do."

But this time she did him an injustice. For in spite of his efforts to hold back from her, yet it is probable that had an arbour encompassed them with privacy at this moment, her caresses would not have gone unrequited.

"Do you remember whether I brought my knitting with me to table?" she enquired.

"I saw nothing," said he in reply.

"Then it will be in my room." And she departed into the house, after casting him another glance. He felt no inclination to follow, but rather repulsion and annoyance at her behaviour; yet he stood up from the bench to go after her, without rightly knowing what he did.

Just as he was entering the door a boy stopped him, who had come down the street with a bundle upon his back slung on a stick. To judge by the powder which besprinkled his coat, one would have taken him for a travelling wig-maker. With frank, confident and lively forwardness he asked Wilhelm: "Can you tell me if a company of comedians is lodging here?"

"There are a few actors living here," replied he.

The host happening to approach, the youth continued: "There must surely be a Mademoiselle among them called Philina; is she at home?"

"Oh, yes," said the host. "Above on the second floor,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

at the end of the passage, you will find her room. I have just now seen her go up."

The stranger heard this with great blue eyes, which flashed with gladness, and, without further lingering, was upstairs in a few steps.

A secret annoyance sprang up in Wilhelm's bosom, and he was in two minds whether to follow him or not. A horseman, however, who drew rein before the hotel, caught his attention by his fine appearance and almost defiant mien, and held him back upon the threshold, especially as the landlord greeted him with an air of familiar friendship, holding out his hand and asking: "Ah! Herr Stallmeister, what is it brings you to see us again?"

"I only want a feed for my horse," answered the stranger. "I must go on at once to the estate to have everything prepared as quickly as possible; the Count is coming to-morrow with his lady, and they will reside there for a time in order to entertain Prince von —— with due splendour, as he will probably fix his headquarters in this district."

"It is a pity you cannot stay with us," replied the host, "we have good company."

A groom who now galloped up took away the Stallmeister's horse. He conversed in low tones with the host, cast a side-glance at Wilhelm, and the latter, noticing that he was the topic of conversation, went away and ascended the stairs in very low spirits.

On arriving above, Madame Melina took him in hand, spoke to him and endeavoured to show that her husband had not been so very wrong. He was angry and would listen to no reasons, and indeed was quite glad to find an excuse for his bad humour. Madame Melina, unaccustomed to bad temper in him, was exceedingly astonished. "I see that I have lost your friendship," she exclaimed, and retired to her room. He did not follow, as he was accustomed to do when any slight discord arose between them, which he was inclined to make good.

In his room he found Mignon busy writing. The child had for some time taken immense pains to write out all she

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

had learned by heart, and begged her fatherly friend to correct what she wrote and help her to acquire a good style of calligraphy. She was indefatigable, and in a few weeks had made much progress. When Wilhelm was quietly disposed she gave him much joy ; but on this occasion he took little notice of what she showed him, at which she was greatly cast down, for she believed she had done her work very well, and looked for praise.

After spending a short time in the corridor to see if he could not discover something of Philina and her young adventurer, Wilhelm's restlessness drove him to seek out the old man, whose harp, he hoped, might exorcise the evil spirits. On enquiring after the man, he was directed to a poor inn in a distant quarter of the town, where he had to climb the stairs to the garret, whence, as he ascended, the sweet tones of a harp floated down to meet him. They were heart-melting, plaintive tones, accompanied by a melancholy and disconsolate song. He crept to the door, and as it was a kind of fantasia, which the good old man continually repeated almost to the same words, the listener, after brief attention, was able to understand something like the following :

“ Who never ate his bread with tears,
Nor all night long in anguish cowers
Upon his bed, sore rack'd with fears,
He knows ye not, ye Heavenly Powers !

“ Ye lead us on through life again,
Ye bring the poor into dependence
Through guilt, then leave him to his pain :
For guilt on earth takes ever vengeance.”

The doleful lament sank deep into the soul of the listener. It seemed to him as though sometimes the old man were hindered by tears from proceeding. At such moments the strings sounded alone, until the voice in soft and broken accents once more mingled with their melody. Wilhelm leaned against the doorpost in deep emotion of soul. This unknown man's sorrow opened his heart, he

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

could not withhold sympathy, and did not even attempt to restrain the tears which the old man's tender lament drew from his eyes. All the sorrows which oppressed his own soul melted away; he yielded to his feelings, pushed open the chamber-door and stood before the old man, who had to content himself with a seat upon a miserable bed, the sole piece of furniture in his wretched lodging.

"What emotions have you not quickened within me, good old man!" he exclaimed. "All that stagnated in my heart you have set afresh in motion. Do not let me disturb you, but proceed, while assuaging your own sorrows, to make a friend happy as well."

The old man wanted to rise and say something, but Wilhelm would not permit him, for he had noticed at noon that the man talked unwillingly; he therefore seated himself beside him on the old straw sack. The old man dried his tears and began to smile kindly. "How did you come here? I intended to wait upon you again this evening."

"We are quieter here," answered Wilhelm. "Sing me something, whatever you will, which accords with the state of your own mind, and act precisely as though I were not here, for it seems to me you cannot go wrong to-day. I consider you very happy to be able to occupy and entertain yourself so pleasantly in solitude, and, being everywhere a stranger, to find the most agreeable society within your own heart."

The old man glanced at his strings and, after a gentle prelude, chimed in and sang:

"Himself to Solitude who gives,
Ah! he is soon alone;
Each loves his love, each being lives,
And leaves him to his moan.
Yea! leave me to my grief!
If for a moment brief
Alone I groan,
Then am I not alone.

“ The lover seeks with footstep light
 His Friend : is she alone ?
 Thus overtakes by day and night
 Me, lonely one, my moan,
 Me, lonely one, my grief.
 Ah ! in the grave beneath,
 When lonely I am prone,
 'Twill leave me then alone ! ”

We should have to be far too diffuse, and even then not be able to convey the charm of the singular interview which our friend held with this romantic stranger. To everything which the youth uttered the old man replied with the most perfect accord in melodies which stimulated every kindred sentiment and opened a wide field of thought. Whoever has attended a meeting of Herrenhutens or other pious people, who edify each other in their peculiar manner, will be able to form an idea of this scene. He will remember how the liturgus or leader manages to interweave part of a song with his address, which elevates the soul to the point whence he desires that it should take its flight ; how he soon after adds a verse from another song in a fresh melody, and to this links on yet a third, which also brings with it the related ideas of the passage whence it is taken, and by the new association becomes fresh and yet individual, as though created for the moment ; whereby then from a perfectly familiar circle of ideas, taken from hymns and sayings, which have much in common, these peculiar Societies appropriate what they need, and are thereby quickened, strengthened and refreshed. Thus did the old man edify his guest by setting in circulation his nearer sensations as well as his more distant ones, both the developing and the slumbering, the pleasant and the painful, whereby our friend was transported into a condition vastly different from his previous depressed and pitiable existence. A consciousness of the nobility of his being, of the loftiness of his destiny, a sympathetic longing to create the good and great among men became afresh revived within him. While praising the old man, he also envied

him the power to produce this feeling in his soul, and asked nothing better than to make common cause with him for the betterment and instruction of the world. His old ideas of hope and assurance, which he had devoted to the theatre, became again active, and with incredible speed he conjoined to them the highest also, so that any sensible man, looking just then into his brain, must surely have held him for mad. When night compelled him to depart, he quitted the miserable chamber with the utmost reluctance, and had never felt so undecided as to what he would or ought to do as during the walk back to his room.

Hardly had he reached the house than the landlord informed him in confidence that Mamsell Philina had effected a conquest of the Count's Stallmeister. On completing his errand to the estate the latter had hurried back in great haste, ordered supper and was now upstairs with her, and seemed as though he intended to remain for the night. To hide his annoyance Wilhelm went to his room; when suddenly a dreadful cry arose in the house. He heard a youthful voice, in loud anger and threatenings, interrupted the while by immoderate weeping and crying. Then he heard the person whence these sounds proceeded hurry downstairs past his room to the courtyard. Attracted by curiosity, he found the young apprentice who had asked so eagerly for Mamsell Philina that day. The lad wept, ground his teeth, stamped and shook his fists and seemed quite beside himself with wrath and vexation. Mignon stood opposite to him for a while gazing at him with amazement, while the host in some sort explained the phenomenon. The boy had been rendered quite merry and gay by Philina's reception, and sang and danced about until the time when the Stallmeister came back, when he began at once to exhibit annoyance, to slam the doors and run up and down stairs. Philina had ordered him to wait upon them at table this evening, at which he promptly evinced discontent. Moreover, instead of placing a dish of ragout upon the table, he had upset it between Mademoiselle and her guest, who sat pretty close, whereupon the Stallmeister gave him a brace of sound smacks on the ear and

flung him out of the room. He, the host, had just helped to cleanse their persons, and could not find words to describe the mess they had been in. On hearing this the lad broke into loud laughter, tears the while running down his cheeks, and seemed to be heartily glad, until the insult inflicted upon him by the stronger man recurred to him, at which he began afresh to howl and threaten. Wilhelm, to whom all this was doubly and trebly vexatious, hastened to his room, and for very tedium and dejection went early to bed.

His unquiet sleep was interrupted by a noise, which, as he was already over-excited, almost frightened him. On the main corridor he heard a sound as of someone drinking, accompanied by quite unnatural groans, which alternated with a mysterious rattle and slight rumbling. He could compare the sounds to nothing known; curiosity prompted him to get up, while a shiver of fear kept him in bed. His jealous imagination, which hovered round Philina's door, followed the ghost thus far, and he fancied he could hear it stop in the corner not far from that beauty's chamber; when suddenly a loud and penetrating scream startled him and mechanically lifted him out of bed. Immediately after came a tremendous bumping, as though a man were tumbling down a steep staircase, followed shortly by a still heavier crash, as though another tumbled after him, and both came to lie opposite his own door. Opening it, he beheld by the light of a glass lamp suspended above it a most singular group, or rather cluster, as we might call it. Enveloped in a great white linen sheet lay two men, one over the other, on the ground, who scuffled and thumped each other with all their might, one of whom just then managed to get the other beneath him and proceeded to batter him vigorously with his fists. Wilhelm had hardly cast enquiring eyes on these figures than Philina appeared above on the stairs, a nocturnal apparition of wondrous disorder, bearing a light, which burned but dimly for lack of snuffing. As soon as she perceived the two combatants, and Wilhelm standing beside them, she uttered a loud cry, placed her light on the

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

ground and fled back to her room. Meanwhile the victorious ghost continued smiting with furious ardour, until at last Wilhelm interfered and parted them. Picture his amazement when in the victor, whom he dragged away, he recognised the blonde-haired arrival of yesterday afternoon, and in the vanquished, who quickly sprang to his feet, the Count's Stallmeister. Neither of them presented a very reputable sight when the linen cloth fell off. The strife seemed on the point of being renewed with vigour, when Wilhelm quickly thrust the lad into his own room, and requested the other, who stood with dreadful threatenings and curses before him, to calm himself until to-morrow early, and then demand or give satisfaction, as the circumstances might demand or warrant. These pacific speeches would have done little good, had not the enraged man begun to feel the pain caused by his fall. He therefore limped away with the host, whom the noise had brought hurriedly to the spot, while Wilhelm took possession of the light to illuminate his new guest, and seek an explanation of this wonderful occurrence.

CHAPTER XIV

WHEN Wilhelm entered the lad skipped about the bedroom like an insane Bacchant; kicked out his legs, flung back his head, waved his arms about and exulted with every extravagance of joy. He triumphed in the victory he had won, in the vengeance he had taken and in the pleasure he had disturbed, and Wilhelm had to defer the questions he wished to put until these paroxysms were over.

But the young man's position in the matter was easily guessed, and in relating his story he told Wilhelm nothing unexpected, which was briefly as follows: In the absence of an apprentice he, as learner, had once been sent to dress Philina's hair; she attracted him to her, and he became a sort of servant, until at last in a fit of jealousy

he had quarrelled with her and run away. But his passion gave him no peace, so that he continually sought her out again. Thrice already he had changed the place of his abode on her account, and although he had promised and sworn to leave her alone, yet whenever she was absent he could find no rest or quiet; she must verily have bewitched him. But now he would have nothing more to do with her. During this narration he became quite weak, wept unrestrainedly, cast himself on the ground and exhibited extravagant sorrow. Wilhelm believed the whole story as recounted to him, although eventually it was found that he had not adhered exactly to the truth. But he told his tale so well, with such an air of sincerity, and knew how to give such lustre to what he had really felt and what had really happened, that omissions were concealed, and probability became certainty. It happened in this case with our friend as with the readers of those writings in which either art or chance, truth or lies, move at random one among the other, so that the wisest are hard put to it to decide whether to accept one with the other, or to reject the lot. Towards morning the idea struck our juvenile adventurer that the Stallmeister would hardly let the matter rest where it was, and that in any case he would come off second best. He therefore quietly packed his bundle, commended himself to Wilhelm and took his departure.

The morning passed in expectation of the noble company, who though only intending to descend at the hotel for a moment, yet occupied, as is usual, the attention and curiosity of all the guests. It was known concerning the Count that he was a man of extensive knowledge and high breeding. He had travelled much, and it was said that he had a decided taste for all antiquities. The few peculiarities related of him were of slight importance, while of the amiability of his consort no one could say enough. Of course everybody had dressed himself as smartly as possible and sought out the position from which he would see them go past. As they drove up in an English carriage piled high with luggage, and from which

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

two servants jumped down, Philina, according to her habit, was the first to hand, and posted herself in the doorway.

"Who is she?" enquired the Countess in entering.

"An actress, your Excellence," was the answer, while the artful rogue bowed low with grave and demure countenance and kissed the lady's robe. Her husband, on hearing the same concerning the other people standing around, enquired where they had last stayed, how many they were and who was their director.

"If they had only been French," he remarked to the Countess, "we might have provided an unexpected pleasure for the Prince, and let him taste his favourite amusement among us."

"That is not impossible," said the lady; "if these people are fairly skilful; it would at least be something, and our Secretary would assist them."

They retired to their room, and the watchful Melina presented himself on the stairs above as director.

"Let him call his people together," said the Count, "that I may see what they are like, and introduce them. Bring me also a list of the pieces they can play."

With a profound bow Melina hastened away, and in a short time his little band stood arrayed before the Count in his room. They pressed before and behind each other, some advancing awkwardly from over-anxiety to please, and others doing no better, because of the giddiness of their manners. To the Countess, who was extraordinarily gracious and kind, the women showed great respect; the Count meanwhile mustering the troupe. He made each one tell what sort of parts he usually played, let him recite something, on which he expressed his opinion to Melina, who received every word with the utmost deference. He told each one what to cultivate especially, in what respects to improve his figure and action, explained lucidly the points in which Germans always fell short, and displayed such extraordinary knowledge that all stood in extreme humility in presence of so exalted and enlightened a connoisseur and patron, scarce daring to breathe.

"Who is the man in the corner there?" asked the

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

Count, glancing towards the door and noticing one who had not been presented to him. Whereupon a lean figure in torn coat and shabby wig, who had so far kept himself concealed, was compelled to advance. This man, otherwise of no importance, usually played the pedant, the schoolmaster or poet, and was generally obliged to accept the rôles in which a beating had to be endured, or someone was to be drenched. He had acquired a certain crawling, ridiculous and obsequious bow, while his stammering speech, well suited to his rôles, generally made folks laugh, so that he was by no means one to be rejected. It was just in this fashion that he now approached the Count, made his bow and replied to his questions, exactly as he was in the habit of conducting himself on the stage. The Count observed him for some time with pleased attention, as though weighing him up, and then turning to the Countess exclaimed :

“My dear, observe this man carefully ; I warrant that he is a great actor, or may become one.” Whereupon the fellow made a silly, bashful bow with great seriousness, so that the Count could not help laughing loudly. “Go, go !” said his lordship. “Get you gone ! the fellow does his part excellently. I bet this man can act whatever he will ; it is a pity they have not yet put him to something better.”

This extraordinary pre-eminence came as a thunder-clap to all the others ; but not to Melina, who replied with an air of great respect : “Ah yes ! both he and many of us have lacked such a critic and such encouragement as we now have the good fortune to find in your Excellence.”

The Count stepped with his wife to the window and appeared to question her about something. One could see that she eagerly agreed with him, and seemed earnestly to beg for something. Then turning towards the company he said : “I cannot linger here at present, but will send my Secretary to you, and if you will make me cheap conditions and take great pains, I am not disinclined to engage you myself for a little while.”

Everyone evinced the utmost joy, and Philina in parti-

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

cular eagerly kissed the Countess's hand. "See now, little one," said the lady, tapping the light-hearted girl on the cheek, "see now, my child, come again to me. I will keep my promise, only you must be rather better dressed." Philina apologised on the ground that she had not much to expend on dress, whereon the Countess at once ordered her waiting-maid to fetch an English hat and a silk neck-cloth, which could easily be unpacked, and to bring them hither. With these she proceeded herself to deck Philina, who continued to wear an air of sanctimonious innocence, which sat very prettily upon her.

As soon as the Count had gone they brought the news to Wilhelm with great demonstrations of joy and triumph. He wished them all luck and let them tell all that had happened, to which he listened with some astonishment. Philina paraded her presents, and on his casting her a side-glance of vexation, left the room singing. Melina begged him to collate quickly with him those pieces which they might propose to the Count, just as though they had already played them.

"You have surely said nothing of me?" interrupted Wilhelm.

"I did not consider myself justified in doing so," said Melina.

"But in any case you will go with us yonder," said Madame with some animation.

"I have no such intention," answered Wilhelm.

The whole company was now seized with an ecstasy of joy at the happy prospect of being provided for during a few weeks; everyone grew active, made plans and talked of parts that he would play, while the more prudent went into the kitchen and ordered a better mid-day meal than they had hitherto been accustomed to take.

CHAPTER XV

THE Secretary came. He was a little, thin, active man, one of those who at that time were called friends of the liberal sciences, but who ought rather to have been named lovers of the useless and the mediocre; for while forsaking the cycle of useful and necessary knowledge, they fancied themselves devoted exclusively to the cult of the beautiful and the agreeable. But in this they sorely deceived themselves: for each one who felt in himself the desire to produce something, merely loved the beautiful so far as it lay within his range of vision, and his taste therefore readily seized upon the common and mediocre as something good and excellent, because by the same right he could raise his own offspring to equal rank, and thus a vast number of young and old were made happy by mutual admiration.

They were all afraid of the Secretary, and Melina was especially anxious lest he should find out the weak side of his little band, and discover that they were in fact not a regularly organized troupe, seeing that, indeed, the leading actor was lacking for almost every play proposed. But the other soon relieved their minds, by saluting them with the utmost enthusiasm, declaring himself happy to find so unexpectedly a German company, to become associated with it and thus introduce the Muses of the fatherland into his master's castle. Soon after this welcome he pulled a manuscript out of his pocket, and begged them to listen to a comedy he had written. They willingly formed a circle around him, rejoicing to win this important man's favour at so small a cost, though from the thickness of the roll each one dreaded a prolonged ordeal. And such it was in truth. It was a play in five acts, of that sort which seems to have no end, and of which, unless this be the unjust reproach of superficial minds prejudiced in favour of the foreigner, we Germans possess several. During the reading each listener had leisure enough to think of himself, and to mount from his

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

humility of an hour ago to a happy self-complaisance, and thence to view the pleasant prospects so unexpectedly revealed. The delighted author lost nothing by this secret absent-mindedness, for the company only applauded the oftener, and whenever one pronounced a passage excellent, the rest chimed in as chorus.

The business was therefore soon concluded. He promised to discharge their bill at the hotel, to furnish free lodging and board at the castle, and furthermore an addition to their travelling exchequer when they proceeded further. He assured the ladies that they would not fail to receive gifts of clothes and trinkets, so that they all, one with another, were changed as by a magic word into new people. Instead of slinking round with a fawning air, as they did in the morning, modestly asking a glass of beer from the host, polite and circumspect towards all, and even quiet and harmonious among themselves, there now arose such a shouting, screaming, ordering, scolding throughout the house, each one demanding something better than the other and demanding it more quickly, that the host's poor head spun round, and he could not help fancying that his household had been doubled, or even trebled in number.

Mrs. Melina endeavoured to persuade Wilhelm to accompany them, a step he could not make up his mind to adopt. "I shall be obliged to go my own way at last," he said to her in a low voice, but so that Mignon, who stood near and listened slyly to their conversation, could overhear him.

CHAPTER XVI

As Wilhelm repeated and turned over in his mind what had been told him this day, he exclaimed: "How fickle is human judgement, even that of the most intelligent! This high-born gentleman, this experienced man of the world, and a great critic to boot, misled perhaps by some fanciful error of the moment, gives his approbation to the

most wretched and insipid mortal of the whole company ; while a witty, wise and most excellent lady accords her favour to a wanton creature, who seems anxious to draw upon herself the contempt of every right-minded soul ; and they regard this Secretary as a connoisseur, yea, even as a good writer. It cannot be long before their eyes are opened, the deception is too crude. Meantime wrong is done to so many others, and the influence of the more highly placed and distinguished, which should serve and help, becomes injurious."

These thoughts were interrupted by consideration of his own position ; for he still hesitated between doubt and necessity. He could see already that he would have to go with the rest to the Count's castle, and yet had a thousand reasons for not going. When a man falls into circumstances which stand in no relationship to the space which his spirit should occupy ; when he finds himself confined, entangled and ensnared, and has long struggled to be free, he at last accustoms himself to a sombre, good-humoured patience, and follows contentedly the troubled pathway of his fate. If at times a flash from some higher sphere shine down upon him, he gladly glances upward, and his soul is exalted. But the weight of his condition speedily draws him down once more, with mild complaint he again relinquishes the augured bliss, and with but feeble resistance submits to that power which bears away both the strong and the weak. And yet such a man we may term happy in comparison with others when found in a situation like that of our friend.

Ever since the startling event which brought him upon the stage he had never had time to come to himself. Without being aware of it, the hidden effects of that step still wrought in his heart ; and simply as a dream he now looked back upon that blissful evening on which he had yielded in ecstasy to his darling inmost passion. The sweet satisfaction of applause still lapped him in its quiet memory, and he cherished a profound necessity for a renewal of its enjoyments. The attachment of the child, this mysterious creature, gave his being a sort of

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

consistency, more strength and weight, which is ever the case when two good souls become united, or even draw together. His fugitive fancy for Philina excited his vital spirits to an agreeable desire, while the old man with his harping and his songs aroused the noblest sentiments, so that for brief moments he enjoyed a more real and worthy blessedness than he could remember during his whole life. On the other hand, all unpleasant earthly burdens lay in the opposite scale: the company in which he found himself, and which might almost be termed bad, their incapacity as actors, and their belief in their own abilities, the insupportable pretensions of Philina, Melina's mean policy, the demands of his wife, the necessity sooner or later of abandoning the dear child to her fate, the lack of money and of any decent means of procuring it. Thus the scales swung this way and that; or rather the fabric was woven of ill-assorted colours, so that, like a badly shot taffeta, it revealed to the glance pleasant and repugnant tints from the same fold; or, if one may be permitted to heap up comparisons, the tissue was so twisted of silk and coarse yarn, so plaited and knotted together, that it was impossible to part one from the other, and no course remained for our hero but to yield submission to these fetters, or boldly cut through everything. Under such circumstances good and even resolute men may drag along for years without daring to move hand or foot, dwelling ever in a state of discomfort, unless some great necessity arise to compel them to choose and act. But even then they are not delivered. Seldom is a man able, or does fate permit him, after a series of sorrows, after a succession of connections, to come to a proper settlement with himself and others. He resolves on bankruptcy as reluctantly as on death, and endeavours to hold out as long as possible with borrowing and paying and fair promises, with arguing and patching. The mind is busy, and continually labours to find some free, perfect and clear condition, while the present moment ever forces him to act under compulsion, or even crookedly, to seize one evil for the other, or, if his luck be good, to leap from the

frying-pan into the fire. This it is which, oft repeated, masters the best-balanced heads, driving violent and passionate men into a kind of frenzy, which in the end may become altogether incurable.

How keenly Wilhelm felt the difficulties of this condition, and how vainly he struggled to free himself ! His former commercial position was parted from him as by a chasm, and himself already received and initiated into a new order, in which he had hoped to linger merely as a stranger in the forecourt. His mind became weary of weighing pros and cons. At length he paced his room, seeming without thought ; his oppressed heart strove after relief, and a sense of dismayed melancholy overcame him. He sank into a chair in much emotion. Mignon entered the room and asked if she might cover him up ? The child had lately grown more and more silent ; imperceptibly Wilhelm had neglected her, and she felt it acutely.

There is nothing more touching than when a love which has been nourished in secret, a faith that has rooted itself in concealment, finally, at the right moment, approaches and is revealed to him who was hitherto unworthy of its worship. The bud, so long and so sternly closed, was now ripe, and Wilhelm's heart could not be more sensitive. She stood before him and observed his disquiet.

" Master," she exclaimed, " if you are unhappy, what must become of Mignon ? "

" Dear little creature," said he, taking her hands, " you too are among my sorrows."

She gazed into his eyes, which glistened with repressed tears, and knelt passionately before him. He held her hands, she laid her head upon his knee and remained quite still. He toyed with her hair and treated her gently. She was quiet for a long time. At last he felt a sort of twitching pass through all her limbs, which, beginning gently, grew stronger and more general.

" What ails you, Mignon ? " he cried.

She raised her head and looked at him, then suddenly struck her hand on her heart with a gesture indicative of pain. He raised her up, and she fell upon his breast ; he

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

clasped her in his arms and kissed her. She responded by no pressure of the hand, by no movement. She pressed hard upon her heart, and then uttered a sudden cry, accompanied by convulsive movements of the body. She sprang up, and then collapsed before him as though every limb were broken. It was a pitiable sight.

"My child!" he exclaimed, raising her up and embracing her, "my child, what is the matter?" The convulsions continued, seeming to proceed from the heart through all her quaking limbs, so that she hung only on his arm. He folded her to his heart and watered her with his tears. Suddenly she became rigid once more, and still more rigid, as one who endures the keenest physical agony; then soon her limbs were quickened with new energy, and she flung herself about his neck like a spring which snaps, while a mighty rent seemed to open her inward being, and a stream of tears poured from her closed eyes into his bosom. He held her fast. She wept and wept, and no tongue can express the vehemence of those tears. Her long hair had come loose and hung about her weeping form, while her whole being seemed to dissolve in an endless fountain of tears. Her rigid limbs grew more pliant, her very inmost soul seemed to be poured forth, and in the confusion of the moment Wilhelm almost feared she would melt in his arms, and that he should have nothing left of her. But he clasped her only the more tightly and securely.

"My child!" he exclaimed, "my child! you are truly mine! If the word can comfort you, you are mine! I will keep you! I will not forsake you!"

Her tears still continued to flow. At last she lifted herself up. A tender cheerfulness shone from her face. "My father!" she cried, "you will not forsake me! You will be my father! I am your child!"

Softly a harp began to sound before the door. The old man was bringing his tenderest songs as an evening offering to his friend, who, still clasping his child more tightly in his arms, experienced the purest and most indescribable bliss.

FIFTH BOOK

CHAPTER I

WITH how much happier a spirit, with how much lighter a heart I begin this Book than the last, wherein I foresaw nothing but obstacles, cares and unpleasantness for our friend ! How heartily I wish good luck to myself and my readers, now that he approaches a career which he may tread with joy and honour !

At the end of the last Book we were already able to conjecture that he would yield to persuasion and go with the rest of the company to the Count's castle ; that he would take a step nearer to the great world, with its rich and exalted inhabitants. How great his advantage in possessing to the full a capacity for perfect development in this new climate ! For the burdens, anxiety, short-sightedness and need which have hitherto almost played the master over him, must first be uplifted from his head, from his breast, if ever a good genius is to lead him from the difficulties of his situation, if his conceptions are to be duly widened, if he is to learn rightly to know those objects after which noble souls yearn, to which they cleave, which they must make their own, if they would fully satisfy their destiny and feel themselves happy. Among the higher classes he will find no lack of men to point him out the way, and make clear to him that a man's nature cannot be worse misplaced than when yielding to a casual passion for unworthy objects, or submitting to obscure dependence upon a company whose members do not accord with his own being, thus becoming the slave of a condition in which faithfulness, fairest and most humane of all qualities, only binds him for his own torment and destruction.

Thrice happy are they whose birth already uplifts them above the lower ranks of humanity, who never need to pass through circumstances in which many a good man wears out the whole term of his existence, nor even to linger among them as guests ! Viewed from their loftier standpoint, how

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

universal and correct must be their outlook, how easy every step of their life ! From the very day of birth they are as though placed upon a ship, so that, during the whole of that voyage which we all must make, they may take advantage of each favouring breeze, or avoid its contrary ; whereas others waste their strength in swimming, enjoy but little benefit from propitious winds, and in time of storm sink with speedily exhausted powers. What comforts, what facilities accompany an inherited fortune ! and how securely an enterprise flourishes when founded upon sufficiency of capital, so that each abortive experiment does not reduce the whole to inactivity ! Who can better know the value or the worthlessness of earthly things than they who have been able to enjoy them from their youth ? who can earlier devote his mind to the useful, the necessary, the true, than he who discovers his many errors at an age in which he still has strength to commence a fresh career ? All hail to the great ones of this earth ! Hail to such as draw near to them, who drink from this fountain and can partake of these advantages ! and hail once more to the genius of our friend, who now prepares to ascend these happy heights !

CHAPTER II

THE Count's Secretary often came across in order to get everything ready for the troupe. Melina submitted a considerable list of works which they were said to have acted. But unluckily it was noted that with regard to one play an indispensable actor had meanwhile left them, to another that their wardrobe was incomplete, and a third also, for some reason or other, had to be struck from the list. Moreover, there was much complaint that actors who had been engaged, to whom travelling expenses had been sent, did not arrive, being possibly detained on their way by war's disquiet. The Secretary, a man gifted with strong faith, let nothing discourage him, but hoped rather to achieve wonders with his little army. A few pieces were looked out, he contributed some of his own after-plays, so that they arrived at mutual agree-

ment, and the general satisfaction grew daily. In what delightful intimacy they sat together as the Secretary told them circumstantially of his lord's hospitality, of the order which reigned throughout the household, and of his care for the least of his guests, thus giving them a foretaste of happier days to come. Moreover, each was well pleased with himself and with the director, being cast for parts such as he could not otherwise easily claim. Philina was to play the tender and sentimental lover and leading juvenile rôles, although she memorised badly and was more accustomed to act the chattering chamber-maid. Madame Melina, who was now in a very hopeful bodily condition, must undertake the serious mother-parts, and her husband, who was born to be anything but an actor, contented himself with the parts of the uncle, father and the like. A well-educated young man, whom they had treated as a boy while the company still hung together, now rapidly came to the front, having trained himself by intercourse with Wilhelm and by his example, and undertook the parts of the leading lover. A few girls and young wives, with passable faces and ungainly figures, shared, in company with their quite insignificant husbands and friends, the less important parts among them. Only Mignon, to whom they wished to assign the rôle of chamber-maid, flatly refused, declaring she would not act at all.

And now they set to work copying and diligently learning; they lived full of hope, ate and drank at the Count's expense, and enjoyed beforehand much of the good which they had yet to earn.

Meantime Wilhelm had also made the acquaintance of the Secretary. The latter was enchanted with our friend's many accomplishments. He urged him strongly to come with the rest to the castle. "Our gentry," said he, "are great lovers of literature, especially of the German, and very just in their judgement of all, and you may be assured of a good reception." On his return one day he urgently invited him on behalf of their Excellencies themselves, and could not sufficiently depict the honour and happiness he would enjoy. This charm

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

proved irresistible to our friend, although the confidential and negligent tone in which the young man spoke of his employers displeased him, as well as his manner of introducing them into his narrative, not as though he were their equal, but as though they were his equals. But as Wilhelm had made up his mind no longer to remain connected with the company, he begged permission to follow thither on his own account, and to lodge in the inn of a neighbouring village, to which consent was readily given.

But he grew daily all the more indignant at the frivolity and indiscretion with which the actors prepared to meet so exalted a public. Scarce even did they read their parts properly, let alone hold efficient rehearsals, or exert themselves to their best ability. They seemed to think everything would work out right in the end. He failed not to sharpen their consciences, and excite their fear of being at once dismissed. At last they settled down somewhat to work, though it was rather the agreeable hope of applause than exertion to deserve it that stimulated them.

On his part Wilhelm set them a good example. He went through their plays, improved the translation of the language, combined the scenes, assigned the rôles according to the actors' capacities, prepared fresh translations of a few French after-pieces, and was kept busy from early morning to deep in the night. His zeal did not remain hidden from the Secretary, to whom the skill with which Wilhelm ordered everything to which he put his hand was something quite new. He was filled with amazement over the sprightliness and sureness of feeling wherewith our young poet managed to separate action and effect from mere narrative and didactic, to give fresh form to whole scenes and plays by some slight modification, and by a happy humour to avoid offending against propriety and decency. Thus it came about that the Secretary, who had an extraordinarily good opinion of himself, nevertheless regarded Wilhelm as well worthy of his friendship. He obtruded himself more and more from day to day, confided to him intellectual projects and criticisms, from which our friend observed, mostly with

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

an unpleasant sensation, that the good man only used big words, while his ideas and matter were very trivial.

At last the time came to prepare for transport, and to expect the coaches and carriages which had been ordered to carry our whole troupe to the Count's castle. Great disputing arose, even beforehand, as to who should ride with the other, and how they should sit. After much trouble, everything was arranged and settled; but to little effect, for at the appointed hour fewer carriages came than were expected, and they had to contrive otherwise. The Secretary, who arrived soon after, gave as the reason that everything was in great commotion at the castle, because, not only was the Prince to arrive some days earlier than they had thought, but that unexpected visitors had also come. Room, therefore, had become very restricted, so that they would not lodge so comfortably as had been intended, for which he was extremely sorry.

They disposed themselves in the carriages as well as possible, and as the weather was moderate, and the distance only a few hours, the merriest preferred making the journey on foot to awaiting the return of the carriages. The caravan set off with glad shouts, and, for the first time, without any anxiety as to how the landlord would be paid. The Count's castle stood before their fancy like a fairy palace; they were the happiest and jolliest men in the world, and each, as he rode along, dated from this day an era of good fortune, honour and affluence.

Even a heavy rain, which surprised them on their way, could not dispel these pleasant anticipations; though, as it grew more persistent and violent, many of them experienced much discomfort. Night came on, and no sight could be more welcome than the Count's palace, which gleamed upon them from an opposite hill, brilliantly lighted through every storey. They could even count the windows. As they drew nearer they found all the windows of the side-buildings equally illuminated, and each began in secret to guess which might be his own room, though most of them were modestly content with a room in an attic or in the wings of the building.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

As they passed through the village and drove by the inn, Wilhelm called a halt, that he might descend there. But the landlord assured him he could not give him even the smallest chamber. Unexpected guests having arrived, the Count had engaged the whole house, the rooms had yesterday been all numbered by his chamberlain, and the names of their occupants inscribed on the doors. Our friend, therefore, was compelled to drive on to the castle with the rest of the company.

The sight of the kitchen fire in a side-building, and the activity of the cooks were the first objects which refreshed and delighted them. Servants came leaping down the steps bearing lights, and the souls of our good wanderers overflowed at the prospect. Great, then, was their amazement when this reception changed into direst imprecations. The servants swore at the coachmen for bringing them in by this way. They must turn round and pass outside the park to the old castle ; for there was no room here for such guests. To the unkindness of these unexpected orders the lackeys added all sorts of banter, and laughed loudly over their fix in having hurried thither through the rain. The clouds still poured out their torrents, no star was to be seen in the heavens, and now the troupe was dragged over a rugged road between two walls into the court of the ancient castle, which had been uninhabited ever since the Count's father built the other in front of it. The carriages halted, some in the courtyard, others beneath a long arched doorway, and the drivers, who were farmers from the village, unyoked their horses and rode away. As nobody presented himself to receive the company, they all got down, shouted and sought, but in vain ! All remained dark and silent. The wind whistled through the cavernous portal, and dismal was the aspect of the towers and courts, whose outlines they could hardly distinguish in the gloom. They froze and shivered, the women quaked with fear, the children began to cry, their impatience increased with every moment ; for so rapid a change of fortune, which none of them were prepared to face, completely disconcerted them all.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

CHAPTER III

As they expected every moment that someone would come to unlock the doors for them, while first the rain and then the storm deceived their ears, so that they more than once fancied they heard the longed-for footstep of the castle steward, they remained for a long time discouraged and inactive. No one thought of going to the new castle to appeal to some charitable soul for help. Nor could they imagine where their friend the Secretary could be. They were indeed in a most grievous plight. At last some people really came. By the voices they recognised that they were the pedestrians of their party, who had been left behind by the carriages. They brought news that the Secretary had fallen from his horse and seriously injured his foot, and that, on enquiring at the castle, they also had been directed hither with abuse.

The entire party was in the utmost perplexity. They took counsel what to do, and could come to no decision. At last they spied a lantern coming in the distance, and drew fresh breath. But all hope of speedy deliverance vanished again when the apparition revealed itself more clearly. It was the Count's Stallmeister, before whom a groom carried the light, and who, on reaching them, asked eagerly after Mademoiselle Phil'na. She had hardly stepped out from the rest of the crowd than he earnestly offered to conduct her to the new castle, where a place had been assigned her beside the lady's maid. Without long consideration she thankfully accepted the proposal, took his arm and would have walked off with him, after commending her box to the care of the others. But they blocked the way, asked, begged, implored the Stallmeister, so that at last, to get away with his fair one, he promised everything and assured them the castle would be opened and they accommodated in the best of style. They soon saw the glimmer of his lantern die away, and had long to wait until, after much watching, railing and ignominy, a new light appeared, to quicken them and bring some small consolation and hope. An old servant opened the

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

door, through which they impetuously rushed. Each looked after his own luggage, unpacked it and carried it within. Most of it, like their own persons, was soaked through and through, and, having but one solitary light, matters progressed but slowly. Inside the building they bumped against each other, stumbled and fell. More light was demanded and fires. With some hesitation the monosyllabic servant left them his lantern, went away and never returned.

They now began to explore the house. The doors were open leading to all the rooms. Huge fire-places, embroidered curtains and decorated parquet-floors still remained to attest their former splendour, but of other furniture nothing was to be seen—no table, no chair, no mirror, scarcely even a few immense empty bedsteads, devoid of all adornment or necessary appliances for rest. The wet boxes and portmanteaux were utilised as seats, some of the weary wanderers made themselves as comfortable as they could on the floor. Wilhelm had settled on two stairs, where Mignon lay upon his knees. The child was restless, and to his query as to what she wanted replied: "I am hungry!" He had nothing by him wherewith to quiet the child, the rest of the party had also eaten all their store, so that he had to leave the poor little thing without refreshment. During the whole adventure he had remained inactive and sunk in thought; for he was much annoyed and furious with himself for not having kept to his first intention and got down at the inn, even though he had to make his bed in the topmost attic. The others behaved each in his own particular fashion. A few collected a pile of old wood in a vast fire-place of the hall, so that they might at least dry themselves, and this they kindled with shouts of jubilation. Unfortunately this chimney-piece was only for ornament, and was bricked up above; the smoke poured quickly back and at once filled the room, the dry wood roared upwards in flames, but the blaze was driven outwards, and as a draught blew through the broken window-panes, giving it an uncertain direction, they were afraid of igniting the whole castle, and

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

hurriedly raked out the fire, trampled and extinguished it. Meanwhile, as the smoke grew ever denser, their condition became unbearable, and reduced them almost to desperation.

Wilhelm had retired to a distant room to avoid the smoke, whither Mignon soon followed him, leading a well-dressed servant, who carried a lofty, brightly burning, double-lighted lantern. The man turned to Wilhelm and handed him some confectionery and fruit on a handsome porcelain plate, saying: "The young lady from over yonder sends you this, and begs you to join the company there; she says," added the servant, "that she is very comfortable and would like to share her satisfaction with her friends."

There was nothing Wilhelm less expected than such an offer, seeing that for a long time he had treated Philina with great contempt. He was indeed so firmly resolved to have nothing in common with her that he was on the point of sending back her sweet gift, and only an imploring glance of Mignon's induced him to accept it with thanks in the name of the child; but her invitation he utterly declined. He begged the servant to take some thought for the recently arrived company, and enquired after the Secretary. The latter was confined to bed, but, so far as the servant could tell, had already given orders to someone else to care for his wretchedly lodged party.

The servant departed, leaving Wilhelm one of his lights, which, for lack of a candle-stick, he had to affix to one of the window-sills, and could now at least indulge in his meditations between four illuminated walls. But it was not much longer before preparations were in active progress for bringing our guests to repose. By degrees candles were brought, though without snuffers, then a few chairs, an hour later some feather-quilts, then pillows, but all wet through, and it was long past midnight when at last straw beds and mattresses were supplied, which, if they had received them at first, would have been very welcome.

In the meantime some eatables and drinkables had also

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

appeared, which were consumed without much criticism though they looked like a very disorderly heap of fragments, and gave no very flattering promise of the respect in which these guests were held.

CHAPTER IV

THE disquiet and discomfort of the night were much increased by the rudeness and exuberant gaiety of a few light-hearted young men, who teased and awoke each other and played all manner of tricks. The next morning dawned amid loud complaints against their friend the Secretary for having so deceived them by holding up quite another picture of the order and comfort to which they were coming. But to their great surprise and delight, they had scarcely gathered their wits when the Count himself appeared with several servants to enquire after their condition. He was exceedingly angry when he heard how badly they had fared ; and the Secretary, who came limping in on someone's arm, laid the blame on the house-steward for having disobeyed orders, and hoped thereby to have got the latter into hot water. The Count at once commanded that everything should be arranged in his own presence for the utmost convenience of his guests. Meanwhile a few foreign officers turned up, who at once struck up acquaintance with the actresses, and while they were still there the Count had the whole company paraded before him, addressing each by name and mingling an occasional joke with his conversation, so that all were quite enchanted with so gracious a lord. Last of all Wilhelm also had to appear, Mignon clinging to his side. He excused the liberty he had taken as well as possible, the Count, on the other hand, seeming to regard it as quite expected.

A gentleman standing near the Count, whom they took to be an officer, though he wore no uniform, spoke particularly with our friend, and seemed the most conspicuous figure present. Large, bright blue eyes, gleamed from

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

beneath a lofty forehead, above which his brownish hair was carelessly thrown back ; he was of medium stature and had every appearance of a resolute, firm and decided character. His questions were eagerly put, and he seemed thoroughly to understand the subject of his enquiries.

Wilhelm afterwards enquired about this man from the Secretary, who could not report much good of him. He bore the rank of major, was a special favourite with the Prince, attended to his most private business and was regarded as his right-hand man ; indeed there was reason to believe that he was his natural son. He had been a member of the ambassadorial staff in France, England and Italy, and been everywhere highly distinguished, which made him conceited and disagreeable. He pretended to know German literature from its very groundwork, and allowed himself therefore all sorts of insipid jests at its expense. He, the Secretary, avoided all intercourse with him, and Wilhelm would do well to follow the same rule. The stranger's name was Jarno, but no one knew what to make of the name.

Wilhelm was at a loss what reply to give, for although there was something cold and repellent about the stranger, yet he felt attracted towards him.

The company was now dispersed throughout the castle, and Melina gave strict orders that they should behave decently, that each should diligently study his rôle, and that the women should lodge apart. On every door he affixed a list of instructions and precepts, consisting of many heads and even stating the amount of the fines which every offender would have to pay into the common fund. A swarm of young officers came one after the other, who jested, not in the most delicate fashion, with the actresses, made fun of the actors and upset entirely the new police regulations before they had time to take root. They chased each other through the apartments, disguised themselves, played at hide and seek, and ere long began to creep in couples into secret corners. Melina, who at first attempted to be severe, was soon reduced to despera-

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

tion by their persistent insolence, and when the Count soon after sent to fetch him to inspect the place where it was proposed to erect the theatre, the disorder became yet worse. The young gentlemen devised all sorts of silly jokes, which by the aid of certain actors became still coarser, until it seemed as though the ancient castle were possessed by a host of furies; and the scandal did not cease until they were summoned to table.

The Count had conducted Melina to a large hall which still belonged to the old castle, but communicated with the new one, and was admirably adapted for a small theatre. There he had himself shown how he desired it to be arranged. Melina agreed with the Count in every point, partly out of deference, and partly because he understood nothing of the matter. He therefore came to Wilhelm for advice, begging him to stand by him in this enterprise. The work was immediately commenced in great haste, the frame of the theatre erected and embellished, for which purpose all the decorations among their baggage which could be utilised were employed, and the rest prepared with the help of a few skilled work-people of the Count's. Wilhelm also took part, helped to arrange the perspective, sketched the scenery and was as busy and anxious that nothing should be badly done as though it were entirely his own affair.

The Count, who often came to see them, was highly pleased, showed how what they did should be properly done, and revealed thereby a very unusual familiarity with every art. And now the rehearsals began in good earnest, for which, too, they had space and leisure enough, had they not been persistantly disturbed by the numerous strangers present. For fresh guests continued to arrive daily, and each wanted to see the company for himself.

For some days past the Secretary had held out to Wilhelm a hope of being specially introduced to the Countess, to whom by oversight he had been already presented along with the rest of the company. "I have," said he, "told this excellent lady so much of you and your witty and heart-stirring plays that she is quite impatient to speak with you

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

and hear you read one or another to her. Be ready, therefore, to come across on the first summons, for as soon as she has a quiet morning you are sure to be sent for." He thereupon indicated a few of his after-pieces as those which he should read first so as to be sure of winning her favour. The lady, added he, much regretted that he had arrived at so unsettled a time, and been obliged to make shift so badly in the old castle with the other members of the company.

With the utmost care, therefore, Wilhelm prepared the piece with which he proposed to make his entrée into the greater world. "Hitherto," said he, "you have worked in quiet for yourself, and received considerable applause for one of your plays from a numerous audience; but it must still remain doubtful whether you are really on the right path and possess as much talent as love for the stage. But to speak in the ears of such experienced judges, in private, where no other illusion can help, is to face a much more hazardous situation than elsewhere, and I should not like to refrain from adding also this delight to my former joys, and thus widening my hopes for the future." He therefore went through several pieces, corrected them here and there, recited them aloud, so as to perfect himself in phrase and expression, and on being one morning summoned to the Countess, thrust into his pocket those which he had practised most, and by which he thought to earn most credit.

The Secretary had assured him that she would be alone with an intimate lady friend. As he entered the room the Baroness von C—— came to meet him with great kindness, rejoiced to make his acquaintance and presented him to the Countess, who was at that moment under the hands of her hair-dresser, while, to his intense amazement, he beheld Philina kneeling beside her chair engaged in all sorts of foolishness. "This pretty child," said the Baroness, "has been singing all kinds of things to us. Let her finish the song she has begun, that we may miss nothing."

Wilhelm listened to the piece with much patience:

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

wishing the while that the friseur would go away before he began his reading. He was invited to a cup of chocolate, for which the Baroness herself handed him the biscuit. He could hardly relish it, because his thoughts were filled with the piece he was to read, and he longed to communicate the sentiments of his heart to the two ladies. Philina also was in the way, for he had often found her a troublesome listener. He watched the hair-dresser's hands with uneasiness, and hoped every moment to witness the completion of his edifice.

In the interim the Count entered, spoke of the fresh guests expected to-day, of the sub-division of the day and of such other domestic matters as might arise. On his exit several officers, who were obliged to leave before dinner, begged permission to pay their respects to the Countess. Meanwhile the lady's maid had finished her task, and the gentlemen were introduced. During this time of waiting the Baroness took much pains to entertain our friend and treated him with great civility, which he accepted with reverence, though somewhat distraught. He felt occasionally in his pocket for the manuscript, and hoped each minute would be the last. His patience was almost exhausted when a dealer in fancy goods was admitted, who pitilessly opened his parcels, cases and band-boxes one after the other, and offered his various goods with the pertinacity peculiar to his race. The company grew larger. The Baroness glanced at Wilhelm and whispered in the Countess's ears; he noticed this without understanding it, until, after an hour of painful suspense, its meaning became clear to him when he reached his apartment. There he found a handsome English note-case in his coat pocket, whither the Baroness had contrived secretly to convey it, and shortly after the Countess's little Moorish servant brought him a prettily embroidered waistcoat without exactly saying whence it came.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

CHAPTER V

A MIXED sentiment of vexation and gratitude spoiled for him the rest of the day, until, towards evening, Melina told him that the Count had spoken of a Prelude which, if the Prince came, might also be produced for the first time before him. In this the characteristics of this noble hero and friend of humanity were to be personified. These Virtues were to enter all together and, after sounding his praises, to wreath his bust with garlands of flowers and laurel, through which his illustrious name with the princely hat should shine in a transparency. He had been instructed by the Count to attend to the versification and general arrangement of this piece, and hoped that Wilhelm, for whom this was an easy matter, would kindly assist him therein.

"What!" cried the latter with some annoyance, "are we in an oilcloth factory, where portraits, illuminated names and allegorical figures are produced to honour a Prince, who, to my thinking, deserves quite another sort of praise? How can it flatter a sensible man to see his effigy set up, and his name glittering on a sheet of oiled paper! I am afraid that, with our present wardrobe, the allegories would give occasion to many equivocations and jokes. If you wish to do it, I can have no objection, but I beg you to spare me any part in it."

Melina excused himself by saying it was only a casual suggestion of the Count's, who left the arrangement of the piece entirely to them.

"With all my heart," answered Wilhelm, "I will do something to please so excellent a gentleman, and my Muse has never had a pleasanter task than to raise its voice, however stammeringly, in praise of a Prince so deserving of high honour. I will think the matter over, and perhaps may succeed in so disposing our little troupe as to produce at least some effect."

From this moment Wilhelm pondered his new task with diligence. Before he fell asleep he had passably arranged it all, and early next morning the plan was complete, the

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

scenes sketched out, and even some of the principal passages and songs rhymed and brought to paper.

Wilhelm hastened to consult the Secretary on certain points and laid his plan before him. It pleased him well, but he expressed astonishment, for it was quite different from the piece spoken of yesterday evening by the Count, which he had ordered and now believed was being turned into verse.

"It is not likely," replied Wilhelm, "that it was the Count's intention to have the piece written precisely as he outlined it to Melina. Unless I am mistaken, he merely meant to give a hint as to the scheme to adopt. An amateur or connoisseur indicates to the artist what he wants, and then leaves the care of its execution entirely to him."

"By no means," answered the Secretary. "The Count relies upon the piece being produced as he instructed, and not otherwise. Yours has certainly a distant resemblance to it, and if we are to execute it and divert him from his original idea, we must do it through the ladies. The Baroness has a masterly skill in this, and the question for us is whether the plan will so please her that she will interest herself in the matter. If so, it can certainly be done."

"In any case we shall need the aid of the ladies," said Wilhelm, "for neither our company nor our wardrobe will suffice for the performance. I have reckoned upon several pretty children who run up and down the house, belonging, I think, to the chamberlain and house-steward." Thereupon he requested the Secretary to acquaint the ladies with his plan. The latter speedily returned and brought news that they wished to speak with him personally. This evening, when the gentlemen settled to play, which, moreover, owing to the arrival of a certain general, would be more serious than usual, they would retire to their apartments under the pretence of indisposition, when he could be introduced by a private staircase and might then present his own case in the best way possible. This air of secrecy would lend the affair

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

a double charm, and the Baroness in particular was already rejoicing like a child at the rendezvous, and at something being secretly and skilfully undertaken against the will of the Count.

Towards evening at the appointed time Wilhelm was fetched and cautiously led in. The graciousness with which the Baroness advanced to greet him in the small cabinet reminded him for a moment of earlier and happier times. She introduced him into the Countess's room, where they at once began questioning and examining. He submitted his plan with all possible warmth and vivacity, so that the ladies were quite delighted with it, and our readers will perhaps allow us to lay it briefly before them.

CHAPTER VI

THE play was to open with a dance of children amid a rural scene, in which each had to turn round and secure the place of the other. Then they were to alternate with other games and finally sing a song to a constantly repeated circular dance, whose topic was the praise of Constancy. Thereupon the old harper was to approach with Mignon and offer to charm them with his song. Several country-people were to gather, while the old man rendered various songs in praise of Peace, Repose and Joy, after which Mignon would give the egg-dance. Amid these innocent enjoyments they are disturbed by military music, and the company is surprised by a troop of soldiers. The men seize their weapons, but are vanquished, the women flee and are overtaken. Everything seems to be going to rack and ruin in the tumult, when a person enters, respecting whose vocation he was not yet quite decided, and announces that the General is not far off, thus bringing all to quietness. Here the character of the hero is described in glowing language; safety, even amid the clash of arms, is guaranteed, while insolence and violence are kept within bounds. A general

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

festivity in honour of the magnanimous commander is then commenced.

The ladies were very much pleased with the plan; but maintained that, in order to suit the Count's taste, it must contain something allegorical. Wilhelm suggested that the leader of the soldiers should represent the genius of Discord and Violence, and that Minerva should finally appear to bind him in chains, to announce the hero's advent and sound his praises. This proposal they accepted with alacrity, and urged Wilhelm to write out the piece and turn it into verse without delay. Lastly, the Baroness undertook to convince the Count that it was his own suggested plan, with a few alterations. But she insisted that during the festivity which ends the piece the bust and illuminated name must actually appear, otherwise she could not vouch for success with the Count.

Wilhelm, who was already picturing to himself how finely he would praise his hero out of Minerva's mouth, only yielded on this point with the utmost unwillingness. He now began considering how to allot the parts and procure the necessary drawings, commended himself respectfully to the ladies, who dismissed him with much kindness. The Baroness, who assured him that he was an incomparable man, accompanied him to the little staircase, where, with a pressure of the hand, she bade him good night.

Fired by their lovely glances and the genuine interest which they took in the matter, the whole plan, which by narration had grown real, now became living. He spent the greater part of the night and the next morning in versifying with his utmost grace both the dialogue and songs. His task was almost finished when he was summoned to the new castle, where he heard that the family, who were at breakfast, wished to speak with him. He entered the apartment, and again the Baroness came first to meet him, as though merely wishing to say good morning, and whispered softly: "Say nothing about your piece, except what you are asked,"

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

"I hear you are very diligent," called the Count to him, "and are working at the Prelude we propose giving in honour of the Prince. They tell me you are going to introduce a Minerva into it, and we shall have to take thought betimes how the goddess must be clad, so that we do not offend in the matter of costume. I am therefore having books brought from my library containing her picture."

At the same moment several servants entered the room bearing baskets full of books of every size and shape. Montfaucon, collections of ancient statues and gems and sundry other mythological works were exhibited, and their illustrations compared. But these were not enough, for the Count's excellent memory called to mind every Minerva to be found, whether on title-pages, vignettes, medals or elsewhere. One book after the other had to be fetched by the Secretary from the library, so that the Count sat at last amid a heap of volumes. Finally, when he could remember no more, he said with a laugh: "I will bet there is not another Minerva in all the library; and it must surely be the first time that a collection of books has had to make shift without its protecting goddess."

The whole company enjoyed the notion, especially Jarno, who after urging the Count to continue sending for fresh books, now laughed immoderately.

"And now," said the Count, turning to Wilhelm, "the question is, which goddess do you mean, Minerva or Pallas, the goddess of War or of the Arts?"

"Would it not be more appropriate, your Excellence," answered Wilhelm, "if we were to leave it uncertain, and, since she plays a double part in mythology, let her also fulfil the double rôle here? She announces the coming of a warrior, but only to pacify the people; but she praises a hero by exalting his humanity, she vanquishes Violence and restores Joy and Peace among the populace."

The Baroness, who was afraid Wilhelm might betray himself, now thrust forward the Countess's tailor, that

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

he might give his opinion as to how such an antique costume ought to be made. This man, experienced in making costumes for masquerades, easily understood how to arrange matters, and as Madame Melina, in spite of her advanced pregnancy, was resolved to undertake the part of the Celestial Virgin, he was instructed to take her measure, while the Countess pointed out to her maid, though with some unwillingness, the garments to be cut up for the purpose. The Baroness cunningly contrived to lead Wilhelm aside and informed him that she had provided everything else. Immediately thereafter she sent for the musician who directed the Count's orchestra, that he might either compose the necessary musical accompaniment or select suitable melodies from those in stock.

Everything now proceeded satisfactorily; the Count asked no more questions about the piece, but busied himself especially with the transparency which was to surprise the audience at the conclusion of the performance. His inventive genius and the skill of his constructor contrived a really admirable illumination. For on his travels he had witnessed the greatest exhibitions of this kind, had secured many engravings and drawings, and knew how to indicate with the utmost good taste what should be done. Meantime Wilhelm finished his piece, allotted the parts, while the musician, who also understood dancing, arranged a ballet, so that all promised for the best.

But, alas! an unexpected obstacle arose, which threatened to create an unhappy breach in his plan. He had promised himself the greatest effect from Mignon's egg-dance, and was therefore not a little amazed when, with her usual frigid manner, she refused to dance, affirming that she was now his and would never more tread the theatre. He tried to move her by all manner of persuasion, and only desisted when she began to weep bitterly. He therefore renounced his desire, let the old man appear alone and changed the scene slightly.

Philina, who was to be one of the country lasses to

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

sing a solo in the circular dance and lead the chorus, rejoiced quite extravagantly. Everything seemed entirely to her taste; she had a room to herself, was constantly with the Countess, whom she amused with her monkey tricks, and daily received some present or other in return. A dress was also prepared for her to wear in this piece, and as she was of a sprightly imitative nature, she had rapidly noted from association with the ladies whatever suited her, and in a very short time acquired refined manners and a good deportment. The Stallmeister's attentions grew rather than diminished, and as the officers also crowded about her, and she found herself transported to such affluent surroundings, she took it into her head to act the prude and adopt a certain air of distinction. Cool and acute as she was, it did not take her eight days to discover the weaknesses of the whole household, so that, had she been a creature who could cherish designs, she might easily have made her fortune. But even here she merely used her advantages to amuse herself, in order to pass a merry day and to be impertinent whenever she saw it could be done without risk.

The parts having now been learned, a general rehearsal was commanded, at which the Count wished to be present, and his wife began to be uneasy as to how he would receive the work. The Baroness secretly summoned Wilhelm, and as the hour approached their anxiety became more evident. For indeed absolutely nothing of the Count's original idea survived. Jarno, who just then entered, was taken into the secret. He was heartily glad, and declared his readiness to place his services at the disposal of the ladies. "It would be a pity," said he, "my dear lady, if you could not extricate yourself from this dilemma unaided, but in any case I will lie in ambush as your ally."

The Baroness related how she had hitherto described the piece to the Count merely in fragments and without order, so that he was prepared for each several item, though still imagining that the whole would accord with

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

his ideas. "During the rehearsal this evening," said she, "I will sit near him and seek to distract his attention. I have also interviewed the constructor, so that the final decoration may prove an undoubted success, although in certain points it is not quite perfect."

"I once knew a Court," replied Jarno, "where a few active and prudent friends like yourself, Madame, were sadly needed. I will order my servant," he added, "to post himself not far from you during the rehearsal; if your arts fail of their effect, call him to you and give him some trifle to fetch or perform, and I will then carry off the Count from the rehearsal and not let him return until Minerva makes her entrée, and the illumination must come to our rescue. For several days past I have had something to communicate to him concerning his cousin, and which for various reasons I have held back; but to-night it must be done. This will provide him some distraction, and that not of the most agreeable character."

Not without some wonder at the manner in which they treated the master of the household, Wilhelm hurried back to the company, who were studying, singing and preparing with utmost diligence. Certain business prevented the Count from being present at the beginning of the rehearsal, after which the Baroness entertained him. Jarno's assistance was not required, for finding plenty to correct, improve and suggest, the Count quite forgot himself in the task, and as Madame Melina finally spoke her part according to his taste, and the illumination went off well, he declared himself perfectly satisfied. But when all was over and they had settled to cards, it suddenly seemed to occur to him that there had been too great a difference. A signal brought Jarno forth from his lurking-place, the evening passed over, the news was confirmed that the Prince was really coming, and they rode out several times to see his avant-garde encamp in the neighbourhood. The whole house was filled with noise and confusion, and our troupe of actors, who had never been specially well served by the unwilling servants,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

now had to pass their time in the old castle in expectation and practice, without anybody paying them much attention.

CHAPTER VII

IN addition to the young officers who sometimes visited the old castle and its inhabitants, our company often enjoyed the interesting presence of Baron von C——, a cousin of that Baroness who had been so helpful to our hero. His love for the native German theatre was most emphatic. He honoured the actor's calling according to its merit, and treated even the lowliest with a respect which charmed everyone. And this was no wonder, for being himself both connoisseur, amateur and author, he honoured those who provided him the pleasantest entertainment, and who first could confer true life upon those works of his own, by which he hoped to attain rank among the most distinguished minds of his fatherland. He was never weary of conversing with them, of discussing theatrical rules, and the best plays and art of various authors. He was generally so kind as finally to draw a manuscript from his pocket and, by some vivid example, illuminate all that had been spoken.

The heroes of his plays were extraordinarily noble persons, worthy of princely favour, of ample wealth and great good fortune, who were nevertheless at all times ready, with purest hearts and clearest judgement, to abjure all these worldly goods ; men who, like children, pardoned every insult with the utmost magnanimity, and renounced every desire like the wisest of mankind. We already know of old that our troupe did not like being read to, and may take it for granted of every actor that he likes better to hear himself than any other. It was therefore a proof of their great respect that they were able to listen to long plays of five acts, and could conceal the yawns which frequently broke out during their most solemn passages. They thus added to the pleasure of his stay among them ; and as he showed himself generous, bought trinkets for the

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

actresses from each fancy-goods dealer, many of whom turned up, and secured many an extra bottle of champagne for the actors, he was always found agreeable. He would stay with them for a whole half-day at a time, let them declaim their parts, and got them to learn by heart several passages from his own works. This pleasant condition had not lasted long before they noticed that in the castle people began to sneer at his excessive intimacy with them, a fact of which Wilhelm had already been made aware by sundry bitter jests of Jarno's. But the Baron did not allow himself to be diverted, defended his action as well as he could, and whenever the others rode off to the chase or settled to cards, hastened thither where an invincible passion attracted him.

At length the Prince arrived. The generals, staff-officers and their usual suite made the castle like a beehive just ready to swarm. Everyone pressed to see the illustrious Prince, all wondered at his courtesy and condescension, and each marvelled to find in the famous hero and general the most agreeable and sociable of courtiers.

In accordance with the Count's orders everybody had to be at his post, and none of the actors was to show his face, because the Prince was to be taken unawares by their unexpected performance. And this was actually the case, for when in the evening they conducted him to the great hall, brilliantly lighted and decorated with tapestries of the previous century, he was evidently quite unprepared for a play, still less for a special Prelude in his own honour. Everything passed off in the best of style, and after the play the company was called forward and introduced, man by man, to the Prince, who most adroitly asked each one some question or offered a pleasant remark. Wilhelm also, as author, had to come forward and received his due meed of praise.

No one enquired specially about the Prelude, and in a few days it seemed as though no such piece had been produced, save that Jarno took occasion to praise it very judiciously to Wilhelm, but, to his great amazement, added the following observation: "It is a pity you play

with empty nuts for empty nuts." For several days this expression dwelt in his mind ; he could not tell how to interpret it, or what to make of its meaning.

Meantime the company played every evening as well as its capabilities would allow, and did its utmost to attract the attention of the spectators. Unmerited applause animated them, and in their old castle they imagined that the vast assemblage of people gathered here during this period had actually come together on their account, that the numerous strangers came hither solely to witness their performances, and even affirmed among themselves, in no very figurative language, that they were the central point around which everything turned and moved. Wilhelm alone, to his great sorrow, noticed the exact opposite. For although on the first occasion the Prince had conscientiously kept his place from beginning to end, yet by degrees he seemed able to dispense in some way or other with attendance. In fact precisely those whom Wilhelm had found by conversation to be the most intelligent, Jarno at their head, passed but fugitive moments in the theatre, sitting mostly in the ante-room, where they played cards or seemed to discuss more serious matters. Wilhelm was grieved to behold the pains which he expended even upon rehearsals so badly acknowledged, but still persevered in the same course, actuated both by custom, weariness and constancy. The Baron continued zealously to visit them, assuring them of the great effect they were producing, and never failed to regret that the Prince's personal preference was exclusively for the French theatre, while others of his people, on the contrary, among whom Jarno was prominent, exhibited a special liking for the monstrosities of the English stage.

Sometimes in the forenoon the Count and Countess summoned one or another of the company to their presence, where everybody beheld Philina floating along in enviable favour and unmerited good luck. For hours together, while at his morning toilet, the Count kept the pedant with him, the same whom, as we saw in the last Book, he had so casually chosen. By gradual degrees

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

this man had been clothed, fully rigged out and equipped even to watch and snuff-box.

The Baroness had meanwhile set her fancy on Wilhelm. She showed herself so condescending, agreeable and tender towards him that he was in danger of losing his freedom. She became so pleasant, courteous and helpful, and at last so familiar, that he was several times on the point of yielding her his heart and bartering it for permission to forget the difference of rank which held them apart.

That this never happened was the fault of none but the Secretary, who herein performed a good service, or, as some may think, a bad one, for our friend. For as Wilhelm, in the joy of his heart, was once praising this excellent lady, and could find no end to his laudation, the former remarked: "I see already how matters stand; our dear Baroness has caught another for her sty." This unfortunate comparison troubled Wilhelm a good deal; for he perceived clearly that it suggested the dangerous caresses of a Circe. "For every stranger," added the Secretary, "believes himself the first upon whom these charming attentions have been lavished; but he errs greatly. We have all been led the self-same dance. She cannot make acquaintance with any male person, no matter who he be, who has not, at least for a time, to become devoted to her, to dangle about her and yearn for her favour."

The happy man who has just entered the garden of the enchantress, and been received with all the delights of an artificial spring, can meet with no more unpleasant surprise than, while listening to the song of the nightingale, to hear the grunt of some transformed predecessor. Equally bad was the effect produced on Wilhelm by this remark. He now watched the Baroness's behaviour with more heedfulness, never took his eyes from her during the play, or wherever else he could observe her, and could speedily see, even without spectacles, that the Secretary's bitterness was not unjustified. Like an obedient pupil he therefore at once let the love episode drop entirely, without extracting any advantage from her favour, while she was

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

at a loss to understand why, with all her seductions, she still failed to arouse the slightest emotion in his soul.

The company was sometimes summoned, each and all, to join the exalted party after dinner. This they accounted a great honour, but failed to notice that at the same time it was the custom to have a number of dogs brought in by huntsmen and servants, and a parade of horses held in the courtyard.

A hint had been given to Wilhelm to seek an opportunity for praising the Prince's favourite Racine, and thereby arouse a good opinion of himself. Such a chance he found one afternoon, when he was invited with the rest, and the Prince asked him if he diligently studied the French dramatists, to which Wilhelm answered with a very emphatic Yes. He had not noticed that the Prince, without waiting for his reply, was already moving away to speak to someone else, but addressed him at once, almost standing in his way. Not only did he greatly esteem the French theatre and study with delight the works of its famous masters, but he had heard with the utmost pleasure that the Prince rendered full justice to the supreme talent of Racine. "I can well imagine," he continued, "that distinguished and exalted personages should appreciate a poet who understood so well to depict the conditions of their splendid entourage. Corneille, if I may venture to say so, described great men, and Racine distinguished persons. When I read his plays I can always imagine the poet as living at a splendid Court, with a great king ever before his eyes, moving among the best, and piercing the secrets of mankind, as hidden behind costly embroidered tapestries. In studying his *Britannicus* or his *Berenice* I feel as though I were really at Court, intimate with the greatness and littleness of this dwelling of terrestrial gods, beholding through the eyes of a keenly perceptive Frenchman kings worshipped by a whole nation, and courtiers envied above thousands, yet each in his natural form, with all his faults and sorrows. The anecdote that Racine fretted himself to death because Louis XIV. showed displeasure

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

by refusing to see him, supplies me the key to all his works ; and it is impossible that a poet of such talent, whose life and death hung upon the glances of a king, should not also have written plays worthy the approval of a king and prince."

Jarno had drawn near and listened to our friend with astonishment. The Prince, who had not replied, but merely indicated his approval by a kindly glance, now turned aside, although Wilhelm, unaware that it was a breach of etiquette to continue a discourse or to exhaust a subject under such circumstances, would gladly have spoken further, and demonstrated to the Prince that he had not read his favourite poet without profit and understanding.

"Have you never seen one of Shakespeare's plays ?" asked Jarno.

"No," said Wilhelm. "What I have heard has not made me curious to make nearer acquaintance with these nonsensical monstrosities, which respect neither probability nor decorum."

"Yet I would advise you," replied the other, "to make a trial of them ; it can do no one any harm to see even the singular with one's own eyes. I will lend you a couple of volumes, and you cannot better spend your time than by shaking off every other engagement and in the solitude of your ancient home looking through the magic lantern of this unknown world. It is wicked to waste your hours in dressing up these apes to look like men, and teaching these puppies to dance. Only one condition I make—that you do not take offence at their form, the rest I can leave to the soundness of your judgement."

The horses were already at the door, and Jarno mounted with a few cavaliers for a pleasant hunting expedition. Wilhelm gazed sadly after him. There was much he would have gladly discussed with this man, who, although ungracious in manner, gave him fresh ideas, ideas such as he needed.

Sometimes when a man's powers, capabilities and

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

conceptions are approaching development, he falls into some perplexity from which a good friend might easily deliver him. He is like a traveller who falls into the water not far from his hostelry ; if anyone were at once to seize and drag him to land he would escape with a single wetting, whereas, left to himself, he might scramble out, but on the wrong side of the river, and have to travel a long way round to reach his destination.

Wilhelm began now to suspect that the way of the world was different from what he had imagined. He beheld close at hand the important and momentous life of the exalted and great, and marvelled at the easy demeanour with which they comported themselves. An army upon the march, a princely hero at its head, so many associated warriors, and such crowds of importunate votaries all combined to inflame his imagination. It was in this frame of mind that he received the promised volumes, and, as we may well imagine, the torrent of this mighty genius soon seized and bore him away to an illimitable ocean wherein he speedily lost and forgot himself.

CHAPTER VIII

MEANWHILE the good relationship between the Baron and our company had been somewhat disturbed. His preference for certain members became from day to day more marked, which of necessity was bound to grieve the others. He extolled his favourites exclusively and thereby aroused jealousy and discord in the company. Melina, who never knew just what to do in cases of dispute, found himself now very unpleasantly situated. The lauded ones accepted their luck without any great show of thankfulness, while the neglected ones manifested vexation in various ways, and managed by one method or another to render the visits of their once so highly esteemed patron very unpleasant. Indeed, when a certain poem, whose author was unknown, began to excite much discussion in the castle, they were not a

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

little pleased. Hitherto the Baron's intercourse with the comedians had been regarded with good-humoured amusement, several little tales had been circulated, and certain occurrences elaborated and twisted to a comical and entertaining form. At last men began to assert that a kind of professional rivalry had arisen between the Baron and some of the actors, who fancied themselves authors, and upon this legend the song of which we spoke was founded. It ran as follows :

- “ A luckless devil, Herr Barōn,
I envy you, that you should stand
So high in rank, so nigh the throne ;
And many a fertile plot of land
I covet, too—your father's hall,
His game preserves, his guns and stall.
- “ And me, poor devil, Herr Barōn,
You envy likewise, so it seems,
That Nature me from birth hath shown
How motherly to me she means.
Light heart and head she gave at once,
And, though I'm poor, I'm not a dunce,
- “ I think 'twere best, dear Herr Barōn,
That as we were we both remain :
Be still your father's son—his own,
My mother I, the while, retain.
Without or hate or envy base
Desire each other's title not,
On Mount Parnassus you no place,
Nor I at Court a gilded lot.”

When it was heard that the Prince had laughed heartily at the poem no one ventured to condemn it, and the Count, who always enjoyed joking the Baron in his own fashion, took occasion to tease him dreadfully about it. They began to wonder who was its author, and the Count, who never liked anybody to seem more acute than himself, hit upon an idea by which he was immediately

ready to swear. It could only have originated from his pedant, who was a very 'cute fellow, and in whom he had long noticed some such talent. In order to procure himself a rare entertainment, he had this actor summoned one morning, and in presence of the Countess, Baroness and of Jarno made him read the poem in his own peculiar manner, for which he received much praise, applause and a present. The Count enquired if he had not also a few other poems of his earlier days, which he prudently denied. Enough, the pedant acquired the reputation of being a poet and a wit, which in the eyes of those who favoured the Baron was equivalent to being a writer of pasquinades and a bad fellow. Henceforth, no matter how badly he might act his part, the Count clapped the more, so that the poor man at last became puffed up and almost demented, and even dreamed of obtaining a room to himself in the castle like Philina.

Had he succeeded in doing this at once he might have escaped a great disaster ; for one evening, as he returned late to the old castle and groped his way in the dark through the narrow lane, he was suddenly waylaid and seized by several persons, while others pounded him severely and belaboured him so soundly in the dark that he was almost senseless, and only crawled with difficulty to his comrades above. These, although professing great indignation, were secretly rejoiced at the incident and could scarcely hide their laughter on seeing him so well cudgelled, and his fine new brown coat all over white, dusty and stained, as though he had been wrestling with a miller.

The Count, on hearing of it, broke out into indescribable anger. He treated the action as a most serious crime, characterised it as a breach of the castle peace, and ordered strictest inquisition to be made by his own justiciary. The dust-stained coat was to be the chief witness. Everybody in the castle who had anything whatever to do with powder or flour was subjected to examination, but without result.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

The Baron solemnly declared on his honour that he had not the slightest share in the disaster which had overtaken the poet, or lampooner, or whatever they liked to call him. Indeed he strongly objected to all such jokes, and though the demeanour of the Count in the matter, whom he had every reason to regard as his friend, had been very disagreeable, he was quite ready to let it pass. The general movement of strangers and endless confusion throughout the house soon buried the whole affair in oblivion, and the unhappy favourite had to pay dearly for the pleasure of wearing strange feathers for a short time.

Our troupe continued to play every evening, and was very well provided for by the care of the Secretary, but now, the better it was treated, the more its demands tended to increase. Indeed, it was not long before both food, drink, attendance and lodging became insufficient, and they importuned their patron to provide better, and to procure them all the enjoyments and comforts he had promised. Their complaints grew ever louder, and the efforts of their friend more and more ineffectual.

Meanwhile Wilhelm scarcely ever appeared. Shut up in one of the hindmost rooms, where no one save Mignon and the harper was granted access, he lived and moved in a Shakespearian world, neither knowing nor feeling anything outside of himself. We are told of magicians, who by magic incantations can summon to their room an immense crowd of all kinds of ghostly figures. So mighty are their conjurations that the space of their room is speedily filled, and the spirits, compressed into so narrow a circle, move around the master and above his head in ever growing numbers and ceaseless transformation. Every corner is packed, every cornice occupied; eggs expand, and gigantic figures shrink to mushrooms. Unhappily the student of the black art has forgotten the word by which to bring an ebb upon this flood of spirits.

Thus it was that Wilhelm sat, and while so vast an agitation stirred his soul, a thousand sensations and faculties awoke within him, of which he had hitherto felt no conception and no premonition. Nothing could

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

arouse him from this condition, and he grew very discontent if anybody ventured to come and tell of what was happening elsewhere.

Consequently he refused to listen when someone brought news that a sentence of punishment was about to be executed in the courtyard. A boy was to be flogged who was suspected of wishing to steal, and as he wore the coat of a wig-maker, was probably one of the rascals who had recently assaulted the pedant. He denied it most vehemently, and could not therefore be formally condemned, so they were going to give him something to remember and then send him about his business, for he had given offence by wandering as a vagabond about the place, sleeping at night in the mills, and had finally set a ladder against the garden-wall and climbed over. But Wilhelm would hearken to nothing of the whole story, until Mignon hastily ran in and assured him that the prisoner was the blonde boy who had had the scuffle with the Stallmeister, and that the latter, who recognised him, was now the chief advocate for the adoption of stern measures.

On this Wilhelm quickly sprang up and found preparations being made in the castle court, for the Count loved due solemnity in such cases. Wilhelm stepped forward and begged them to stay their hands, as he knew the lad and had first several things to urge in his favour. He had difficulty in prevailing by his representations, but at last was allowed to speak alone with the boy. The latter assured him he knew nothing of any attack in which an actor had been injured. His motive in roaming round the castle and stealing in at night had been to find Philina and discover her bed-chamber, which he would certainly have done, had he not been captured on the way. Wilhelm who, from loyalty to the company and kindness for Philina, did not wish to betray the episode, approached the Stallmeister and begged him from his knowledge of the persons and of the house to act as mediator in the matter and to have the lad set free. "Before I consent to see this boy mishandled," said he, "I will rather

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

reveal everything that took place at the inn yonder, and what it is brings the boy here by night. You will do best, therefore, for your own honour's sake, to give another direction to the affair, if that be possible."

The Stallmeister gave way, promised and really kept his word. They invented a little story, that the boy had belonged to the troupe and run away, but now wished to return and become again a member. He had therefore devised this means of seeking by night some of those whom he knew to be well disposed towards him. They testified also that he had otherwise behaved well, the ladies joined in the argument, and he was set free.

Wilhelm took him in, and he became the third person in that wonderful family which he had recently gathered about him. The old man and Mignon received him into their midst as one whom they already knew, and all three entered into a league to wait upon their friend and protector and to make themselves agreeable.

CHAPTER IX

PHILINA became daily more adept at ingratiating herself with the ladies. When alone together they mostly entertained each other with talking about the men, and Wilhelm was not the last subject of their discussion. Philina soon perceived that he interested the Baroness. The latter, annoyed to find that for some time past he had most obstinately withdrawn from her friendly and seductive charms, could not understand how he could be so impertinent as to remain insensible and sulky towards them. As Philina had a good deal to tell about him, and was encouraged to talk, it was natural she should quickly come to speak of his theatrical talents, and she desired nothing more earnestly than that the ladies should see him on the stage. She added as a great secret that he was really an actor and had performed with their company, but now, for some whim which she could not explain, had determined never to do so again. Scarcely

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

had the ladies discovered this important mystery than it fired their imagination with a fresh charm, and they also longed above everything else to behold him upon the boards. They could not rest nor be quiet until Philina had promised to attempt the negotiations, whereby she earnestly begged them not to betray the fact that she had revealed his secret. As he had long kept quite out of her way and never spoke to her, she asked the Baroness to procure her an opportunity of gaining speech of him. It was arranged that they should have him summoned, as though the ladies wished to speak with him ; but that they should not at once appear, so that he might find Philina in the room in their stead. The Baroness was satisfied with the proposal, and Philina still more so ; for although quite serious in her desire to please the ladies, she was yet more anxious to do something on her own account and bring the ungracious man once more into better ways.

The plan was carried out, and Wilhelm, to his great astonishment, found himself alone in the room with Philina. She greeted him with a sort of decorous ingenuousness such as she had lately practised. At first she rallied him in general upon the good fortune which had pursued him, and then reproached him pleasantly with his conduct towards herself, launched out into complaints, blamed herself for having truly merited such treatment, drew so artless a picture of her own position, which she described as being unaltered, freely confessed all, and finally added that she must despise herself, did she not feel that she was capable of reforming her life and becoming worthy of his friendship.

Wilhelm was startled by this declaration. He had too little experience of the world to know that it is precisely the fickle and unimprovable people who most severely condemn themselves, who confess and bemoan their faults most candidly, although not possessing the least inward strength to abandon the path upon which their unconquerable propensities drive them along. At last, finding him somewhat mollified, she presented her petition, saying : “ that if he would not support the theatre, and join in

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

acting certain plays, it could not manage to exist for another week." She made the idea look as easy and practicable as she could; but was unable to extract any promise from him, and had to be content with a general expression of approval.

CHAPTER X

SCARCELY had Wilhelm read a few of Shakespeare's plays than the effect made upon him became so overwhelming that he could proceed no further. His entire soul was set in movement. He sought opportunity of speaking with Jarno, and could find no words adequate to express his thankfulness for the delight he had procured him.

"Yes, I foresaw," said the latter, "that you could not remain insensible to the excellencies of this most extraordinary and wonderful of writers."

"Ah!" exclaimed Wilhelm, "I do not recollect any book, any man or any event of my life that has produced such a tremendous effect upon me as the priceless works which, through your kindness, I have just learned to know. They appear like the work of some heavenly genius, which has drawn nigh unto men, that, by the gentlest of means, it might make them known unto themselves. They are not mere poems; one imagines oneself in front of the opened prodigious book of fate, through which roars the whirlwind of a tempestuous life, turning its leaves to and fro with rapid violence. I am equally amazed at their strength and tenderness, their power and repose, and so carried out of myself that I long with earnest longing for the time when I can continue my reading."

"Bravo!" cried Jarno, seizing our friend's hand and pressing it. "That is what I hoped for, and the results which I expect will assuredly follow."

"I wish," replied Wilhelm, "that I could reveal to you all that is now surging in my bosom! Every premonition which I have ever felt respecting humanity and its destiny, which, known to none but myself, has accompanied me

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

from youth up, through which the men I have met in life, and the circumstances in which I beheld myself and others placed, have all one by one encountered me afresh as old acquaintances—these premonitions I find fulfilled and developed in Shakespeare's plays. It seems as though he unfolded all riddles, without one being able to say this or that is the word of solution. His men appear to be natural men, and yet are not. These most mysterious and complicated creations of Nature act before us in his dramas as though they were watches, whose dial and case are of crystal; they indicate, as intended, the time of day, while we can see the wheels and springs which set the whole in motion. The few brief glances which I have cast into the world of Shakespeare impel me more than anything else to hasten my advancing steps through the real world, to mingle in the flood of those destinies which are ordained for it, and some day, if fortune favour me, to draw from the mighty ocean of true Nature a few gobletsful, and, like the glorious Briton, dispense them from the stage to the thirsty public of my fatherland."

"I rejoice greatly to see you in such a frame of mind," replied Jarno, laying his hand on the agitated young man's shoulder. "Do not let your intention slumber, but hasten to make abundant use of the good years granted you. If I can give you a helping hand, it shall be done with all my heart. I have not yet enquired how you came to be in this company, for which you can never have been born or educated. But this much I hope and can perceive, that you wish yourself out of it. I know nothing of your parentage or domestic circumstances; consider then carefully what you like to confide to me. I can only say this, that these times of war in which we live may produce rapid changes of fortune. If you are disposed to devote your strength and talents to us, and are not afraid of taking pains and, if need be, of facing danger, I have just now a chance of establishing you in a position, which, when you have filled it for a time, you will never regret in future."

Wilhelm could not sufficiently express his gratitude, and

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

was readily willing to relate the whole story of his life to his friend and protector.

"Think over what I have said," responded the other; "give me your answer when convenient and place confidence in me. I assure you I have hitherto found it inexplicable that you should have anything in common with such a herd. It has often disgusted and grieved me to see you, for the sake of a pitiful existence, hanging your heart upon a strolling ballad-singer and a silly bastard."

It was fortunate that immediately after these words Jarno quickly went away, else our friend's perplexity would have been still more intensified by his presence. It was long since he had heard anything so insupportable as that the two human beings who most interested him should be so offensively spoken of by the mouth of a man whom he highly esteemed, and in whom he had reason to place the utmost confidence. He was furious to the depths of his heart and hastened away to solitude. There he broke out into reproaches against himself for ever having misknown and forgotten for a moment the hard-hearted coldness of Jarno, which shone from his eyes and spoke in his every gesture. "No," he exclaimed, "you withered old man of the world, you merely fancy that you can ever be a friend! All that you can offer is not equal to the sentiments which bind me to these unfortunate creatures. What a piece of good luck that I discovered in time what to expect from you!"

He clasped Mignon, who came to meet him, in his arms and exclaimed: "No, nothing shall part us, you darling little creature! The plausible wisdom of the world shall not persuade me to leave you, or to forget all that I owe to you."

The child, whose eager embraces he usually declined, rejoiced at this unexpected outbreak of tenderness, and clung to him so that he could at last scarcely shake her loose.

From that time forth he observed Jarno's conduct more carefully, and found that it by no means met his approval. Indeed he saw much that entirely displeased

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

him. Thus, for instance, he formed a strong suspicion that Jarno had composed the poem against the Baron, for which the unfortunate pedant had paid so dearly. He jested about the matter in Wilhelm's presence, and our friend considered it a sign of a bad heart thus to scoff at an unlucky man whose misfortune he had himself caused, without ever thinking of reparation or compensation. Wilhelm would himself gladly have supplied these, had he not by a singular accident happened upon the track of the perpetrators of that night attack. It had hitherto been successfully concealed from him that several young officers spent whole nights in a lower hall of the ancient castle in jollity with some of the actors and actresses. One morning, having risen early according to his habit, he chanced to enter the room, and found the young gentlemen just making a very singular toilet. They had made a mixture of water and chalk in a basin, and without undressing were rubbing the paste with a brush upon their waistcoats and trousers, thus restoring the cleanliness of their garments in the quickest manner possible. Our friend, much astonished at this stratagem, bethought him at once of the pedant's white-stained and dusty coat. His suspicions, too, were strengthened when he learned that among them were several of the Baron's relations. He had just decided to inform the Count of this, when by the decampment of the army every other consideration was reduced to silence.

CHAPTER XI

THE more the troupe prospered, the better their food and drink, so much the more did their innermost nature reveal itself to their disadvantage. In addition to their entire board, they received each week a trifle of pay, and having for the moment no need of anything, always had money in their pockets, and scarcely knew how to contain themselves for insolence. The prudent Melina

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

utilised the little ready cash he had left in order to equip himself decently. He bought a few of the Count's clothes from his valet, and contrived to rig himself out quite smartly from head to foot.

Unfortunately for them all the army was compelled to advance and quit the district. The Prince made preparations for breaking up, and as he showed himself very generous to all in the castle, the Baroness managed to secure a gold watch for Wilhelm, which, though of no great value, should yet mark the satisfaction with which the Prelude written in the Prince's honour had been received. The Baroness contrived to present it to him herself and thereby to emphasise delicately her own friendship. Before his departure Jarno sent several times to him, and also called to see him; but he was firmly resolved to keep out of the way of this unfeeling man of the world. The Prince rode away, and the castle was empty.

Certain of the troupe now really imagined that they would henceforth be quartered in the new castle and receive better and more comfortable apartments. How greatly then were their hopes disabused when the announcement was made that in eight days they also must forsake this paradise.

Philina did her utmost to tempt our hero once more to tread the stage during this interval; but in vain. But she succeeded in persuading him to give a few chamber-readings, in which he bore himself very well and confirmed the ladies' good favour. Of this he experienced indisputable proofs on his departure, for they offered him a purse, worked by themselves, and containing thirty ducats. A portion of this was said to be a present from the lord of the house, to which, however, as it seemed to them insufficient, they had added somewhat from their own exchequer. This offer he obstinately declined when made; until at last Philina stepped between, waggishly bowed and took the purse from the Baroness' hand. "I must thank you, gracious lady," said she, "in his name, and in future be his treasurer.

Throughout our travels he has so honestly expended his own cash on our behalf that I feel myself in duty bound to care for him now."

This conceit led to further jesting, and as the Countess was feeling in her desk, and Philina had noticed that she was secretly well disposed towards Wilhelm, and sometimes also delighted like a child in giving presents, she easily contrived with the merriest impudence so that the lady should give him a golden box as well, besides a pretty ring and several other elegant trinkets of value, which each time, upon his refusal, she pocketed with a sportive jest, and, while plundering the ladies, managed to amuse them.

Wilhelm, to whom this soon became wearisome, took his leave, that he also might make preparations for departure. Philina quickly followed him to the castle, where she found him in some perplexity as to where he should pack his clothes and belongings, for he had generously placed his boxes at Madame Melina's disposal, whose wardrobe, through the favour of the gentlefolks, had greatly increased during their stay. As soon as he turned round Philina immediately seized the best articles, and with assistance from the blonde, blue-eyed rogue, who stood ready to obey her every signal, carried most of his possessions over to the new castle, saying she would pack them all in her own box. This she could easily do, for the Stallmeister, not content with many rich presents, had also bought her an excellent box, that she might carry all away in the best and securest fashion. Wilhelm, to whom any favour from her was distasteful, encountered her with impatience, by which he won nothing for himself but to be laughed at, coupled with a threat that, if he were not quiet she would throw her arms around him. He must therefore let the wild creature have her way, and consider himself lucky if she left him otherwise at peace.

The question now arose how they should travel and in which direction they should go in order safely to reach H—— during these perilous war-times. The major part

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

of these anxieties had been already removed by the Count himself, he having carefully considered how far he could let them travel with his own people. He had drawn out their route from place to place, and obtained them a pass from the Prince, which should secure a safe-conduct through the rearguard. This plan he explained to the director, and made him promise to adhere to it strictly. The castle grew ever more empty; the day fixed for the Count's own departure approached, and the company had to make up its mind to separate. It was a hard parting, for in all their lives they never remembered such happy days. Nevertheless, having all received gifts, and setting out with moderately furnished pouches, most of them parted in hope of elsewhere being able to procure a like pleasant life. With much trouble, and not without some quarrelling, they were finally packed in with their effects. The Stallmeister took affectionate leave of Philina, and the Secretary said a kindly goodbye to the rest, and once more they set out upon their journey, without any real prospect of employment, but with all the greater assurance of their own excellencies and merits, as having every claim to recognition elsewhere.

CHAPTER XII

It would be unreasonable to entertain our readers, who moreover may already complain of excess of detail here and there, with the adventures and occurrences which befell our company. We will therefore overleap many a mountain and valley, across or through which they dragged their way in wretched weather, and will look them up at an inn, where they had taken up their quarters to secure fresh carriages and horses, and at the same time find a little relaxation. This each one did in his own way, and it was really curious to watch how they split up into small companies, and at various tables had all

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

sorts of stewed and roast dishes served according to their very different tastes.

From the very beginning of the journey Melina had tried to make it clear that each would be expected to complete the transit at his own cost. Hitherto he had acted as though he were director, but this had been done merely to give them the appearance of being a company, and besides, what he had received from the Count had been honestly and proportionately divided among them all. It was not advisable to form a common cash account. If each one paid for himself, then each would be free to live as he liked. All were quite satisfied with the arrangement, for thus each remained lord of what he possessed, and Melina very prudently relinquished his quality of director as soon as it seemed likely to become burdensome.

Wilhelm meanwhile was in the happiest of humours. He had just happened to read in Shakespeare's life of Henry the Fourth the story of how a Prince amused himself for a time among low and even evil companions, and, despite the nobility of his own nature, revelled in the sensual coarseness, indecency and folly of these rascals. He therefore possessed an ideal with which to compare his own condition, and it wonderfully facilitated that self-deception for which he felt an almost invincible inclination. He began to study the various articles of his attire, and found that a short vest, over which, in case of need, a mantle might be flung, was a far more suitable dress than that usually worn. This he at once adopted and, as he often proceeded on foot, added somewhat wider trousers and a pair of laced boots. It was not long before he appeared with a scarf wound round his body, which at first he wore under the pretence that it kept his stomach warm. On the other hand, he delivered his neck from the bondage of a neckcloth, had a few strips of muslin sewn into his shirt as frills, which, being cut somewhat too broad, had quite the appearance of a collar. A round hat with a gay-coloured ribbon and feather made his outfit quite complete. In a word, he stepped forth with a figure such as we have in

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

later days seen adopted by a number of Goettinger students in imitation of Hamlet, and also by a whole nation in obedience to their King. Everyone considered this costume very handsome, and the women especially asserted that it sat well upon him. Philina pretended to be quite infatuated with it, which was no ill method of commending herself, and our friend, who now treated the rest, according as each behaved, in Prince Harry's manner, soon fell himself into the habit of furthering and prompting sundry mad tricks, and was altogether in the pleasantest, liveliest and most knightly of humours. For the present their theatrical exercises were suspended; rapiers were brought out, they fenced and romped, and, in the lightness of their hearts, enjoyed the moderately good wine in ample measure. Considerable disorder naturally arose from this manner of life. Philina waylaid our demure hero, and my fair readers would have need to be uneasy about their friend's morals, had not a lucky star diverted his thoughts in another direction.

CHAPTER XIII

ONE of the most delightful entertainments in which they specially revelled was an extemporised play, in which they imitated and criticised their recent benefactors. Some of them had carefully noted the peculiar outward deportment of various distinguished persons, and their reproduction of these was greeted by the remaining company with vociferous applause. From the secret archives of her own experiences Philina produced several remarkable declarations of love, which had been made to herself. When Wilhelm took them to task for this incivility, one of the shrewdest among them replied: "They have paid and fed us for our playing, but I do not know that their treatment otherwise demands any peculiar forbearance on our part." These words were the signal for each to launch out in complaints of the small respect shown him and the manner in which he had been neglected. They mocked

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

the behaviour of the people of rank, even among themselves, scoffed at their idle and useless occupations, and grew ever bitterer and more unjust.

"You presume too much," replied Wilhelm, "and though there is a good deal of truth in what you say, yet you overlook the mistake you commit in regarding these people and their actions from too low a standpoint. I cannot say myself that I was specially edified at the castle, yet I have had opportunity to correct certain ideas, and for this am indebted to intelligent friends. Persons who by birth are already set up on an exalted pinnacle in human society, to whom inherited wealth assures an absolutely easy existence, who, if I may so express it, are conveniently and amply furnished with all the accessories of humanity, usually accustom themselves to regard these possessions as the first and greatest of things, and lose all conception of the worth of a humanity equipped by Nature alone. Not only their deportment towards their inferiors, but also among themselves, is calculated according to external advantages. They allow every man to assert his title, his rank, his fortune, his dress and equipage, but not his merits."

The whole party applauded these sentiments uproariously, and poured out a flood of anecdotes which strongly supported his opinion. "Do not revile them on this account," continued he, "but rather pity them; for they seldom possess a lively sentiment for that happiness which we rightly consider the highest, because it springs from the inner wealth of our nature. Only to us poor folks, who possess little or nothing, is it permitted to enjoy the bliss of friendship in its purest forms. We cannot uplift those whom we love by our grace, nor assist them by our favour, nor delight them by our gifts; for we have nothing but ourselves. We must therefore give this entire self, if it is to have any worth, and ensure this possession to our friend for ever. What bliss! what rapture both for the giver and the receiver! What happiness, beyond all things earthly, dwells in constancy! It endows this fleeting human existence with celestial certainty. This it is

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

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WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

the behaviour of the people of rank, even among themselves, scoffed at their idle and useless occupations, and grew ever bitterer and more unjust.

"You presume too much," replied Wilhelm, "and though there is a good deal of truth in what you say, yet you overlook the mistake you commit in regarding these people and their actions from too low a standpoint. I cannot say myself that I was specially edified at the castle, yet I have had opportunity to correct certain ideas, and for this am indebted to intelligent friends. Persons who by birth are already set up on an exalted pinnacle in human society, to whom inherited wealth assures an absolutely easy existence, who, if I may so express it, are conveniently and amply furnished with all the accessories of humanity, usually accustom themselves to regard these possessions as the first and greatest of things, and lose all conception of the worth of a humanity equipped by Nature alone. Not only their deportment towards their inferiors, but also among themselves, is calculated according to external advantages. They allow every man to assert his title, his rank, his fortune, his dress and equipage, but not his merits."

The whole party applauded these sentiments uproariously, and poured out a flood of anecdotes which strongly supported his opinion. "Do not revile them on this account," continued he, "but rather pity them; for they seldom possess a lively sentiment for that happiness which we rightly consider the highest, because it springs from the inner wealth of our nature. Only to us poor folks, who possess little or nothing, is it permitted to enjoy the bliss of friendship in its purest forms. We cannot uplift those whom we love by our grace, nor assist them by our favour, nor delight them by our gifts; for we have nothing but ourselves. We must therefore give this entire self, if it is to have any worth, and ensure this possession to our friend for ever. What bliss! what rapture both for the giver and the receiver! What happiness, beyond all things earthly, dwells in constancy! It endows this fleeting human existence with celestial certainty. This it is

habit, and what satisfaction we should experience. I have often contrasted musicians with actors. The former are never so well pleased as when they can practise in common. What pains they take to bring all their instruments into harmony, to give right expression to the strength or softness of each note, so as to accord well with the voice they have been appointed to accompany. Only the most unskilful would dream of seeking to gain credit by playing too loud an accompaniment to a solo. Each is controlled by the thought of the composer, and, whether his share be small or great, contributes his own best efforts towards interpreting him. Should not actors also be able to do the same one with the other? reckoning it their greatest happiness and pleasure to satisfy each other mutually, and only valuing the applause of the public as this is accorded to an elegant performance, whose excellence each member has equally guaranteed. All those pettinesses which degrade this noble art to the level of a trade would disappear, there would be no more quarrelling for certain parts, none would wish to shine in the wrong place, each would do justice to his rôle and feel rewarded, even though it were the smallest. How the director of such a combination would commend his good luck! But he also must be familiar with the whole business, must understand how to point out to each one his special capabilities, must only undertake himself those parts for which he is adapted, and must not lay claim to an exclusive right to act this or that kind of character, such as no other member would be allowed to assert. Thus at last each would fall into the position best suited to his temperament, and in which practice has confirmed him, and in this position would easily be acknowledged by everyone else. Certainly, among good people, the republican is the best and only form. If I had any voice in such matters, I should advocate the post of director being occupied by each in turn, to whom a sort of senate might be assigned."

"What is there to hinder us," cried they, "from

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

making the experiment at once? We are all alike free men, and have neither alliance nor engagement. At least let us form such an ideal republic during the journey which lies before us."

"It will be a wandering state," said one, "we shall at least have no disputes about frontiers."

They proceeded with the business at once, elected Wilhelm as first director, appointed him a senate, seats and votes being granted to the women, laws were proposed, rejected, accepted, and thus the time passed away, and each vowed he had never spent so pleasant an evening.

CHAPTER XIV

Nor without much trouble had they managed to collect sufficient horses in the little town for the transport of their company and its effects. At last all was ready, when a fresh obstacle arose. News arrived that a corps of military volunteers had been seen in the neighbourhood, indeed on the route they wished to travel.

Although very vague and ambiguous, and though the positions of the two armies made it almost impossible that a party of the enemy could have slipped through, yet this unexpected rumour set them all thinking. Everyone seemed bent on magnifying to our party the dangers which awaited them, and upon counselling another route. Most of them became greatly terrified, and when, in accordance with the forms of their new republic, the senate assembled to discuss and decide this extraordinary position, they were almost unanimously of opinion that they ought to shun the risk and choose another way. Wilhelm alone was not so alarmed as to relinquish at once a plan adopted after ripe meditation. He rather sought to inspire courage, and his arguments were both manly and convincing.

"So far," said he, "it is merely a rumour, and how many such do not arise in times of war! Many say that

the fact is most improbable and nearly impossible. Shall we then allow ourselves to be guided in so important a matter by an uncertain tale? The route indicated by the Count, and for which our pass is valid, is the shortest, and here, too, is the best road. It conducts first of all to a considerable town, where we shall either find a good company, or be able to show ourselves and earn something. We thus avoid much discomfort and save both time and money, whereas the other route, recommended by a timorous public, and respecting which I have made careful enquiry, leads so far out of our way and entangles us in such a maze of bad roads, that I doubt our ability to extricate ourselves before the bad season, or to reach the destination we have set before us."

Much more of the same sort he said, and presented the matter in so many advantageous lights, that their fears diminished and their courage rose. "Possibly it is a corps belonging to the friendly army, from which the pass we carry will be an effectual protection. And if they be some of the enemy's regular troops, we shall have little cause for anxiety, for I do not see how travellers can be implicated in the strife of kings. Should, however, a body of vagabond rabble attack us, surely, I think, we are enough to inspire them with respect, and to offer such a resistance as will surprise them."

These last remarks quickly brought the younger actors over to his side. The suggestion being heroic and singular, the women also assented, Madame Melina first of all, for although far advanced in pregnancy, she had by no means lost her courage. The rest of the men not wishing to appear cowardly, there was soon no one left who did not seem to approve the project with all his heart.

They now began to prepare to defend themselves under all circumstances. They bought big hunting knives, while Wilhelm procured a sabre and a brace of pistols. The young actor whom we mentioned at the beginning of the Book, and whom we shall henceforth speak of as Laertes, armed himself with a musket, while sundry old weapons were distributed among the rest, and thus they again took

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

the road, though with some unwillingness on the part of the drivers.

On the second day these men, who knew the district well, proposed that they should rest at noon on a woody spot among the hills, because, although there was a village close by, yet it was very inconveniently situated, and they would thus avoid an awkward hollow. As in fair weather fodder was usually carried with them, they accordingly halted at the place mentioned, and the day being brilliantly fine, everybody concurred. Wilhelm hastened on ahead, and the singular figure which he cut would certainly have startled anybody whom he happened to meet. To the garb already described he had added a broad shoulder belt, which he wore across his body, with a great sabre hanging from it. A brace of pistols projected from his belt, and in this guise he mounted the wood with rapid and contented steps. Equally wonderful was the company that accompanied him. Mignon ran in her little vest by his side, and also carried a hunting knife, which, when the party was arming itself, they had not been able to refuse her. The blonde-haired boy, who had not quitted the company, bore Laertes' musket. The harper wore the most peaceable exterior. His long robe was tucked up in his girdle, so as not to impede him in walking, he supported himself on a knotty staff, while his instrument had remained behind in the carriage. After an ascent, which was not without its difficulties, they reached the indicated spot. They recognised it by the beautiful beeches surrounding and adorning it, by the walled fountain and the distant prospect. They took possession, rested a while in the shade, kindled a fire and then awaited the others with singing. These gradually arrived, and with one mouth praised the place, the neighbourhood and the lovely weather.

CHAPTER XV

THOUGH they had often enjoyed good and merry hours within four walls, yet here they found it still pleasanter,

for the wide-expanding sky and the beauty of the country stimulated every heart. They could imagine nothing more delightful than to spend a life in so delicious a spot. They envied the hunters, charcoal-burners and wood-men whose calling kept them in so delightful a dwelling-place. But above all they extolled the wandering life of gipsies, who in blissful indolence are privileged to enjoy all the romantic charms of Nature.

Meanwhile they had commenced to boil potatoes, several pots stood near the fire, and the whole company settled in groups beneath the trees and bushes, their singular attire giving them a strange appearance, rendered still wilder by the weapons they carried. The horses were feeding near them, and if they had but taken the precaution to conceal their carriages, the mounting of the scene would have been complete. Wilhelm was enraptured with the sight. He might regard himself as the leader of this party, and elaborated this idea in conversation with each, giving it as poetical a form as possible. The company's sense of pleasure was still further heightened, they ate and drank and made merry, declaring that never had they known more delicious moments.

We cannot here hide from our readers that this was the original scene, whose reproductions and imitations we have lately beheld *ad nauseam* on the German stage. The idea of stalwart vagabonds, noble robbers, generous gipsies and all sorts of idealised rascaldom, owes its true source to this identical resting place, which we have just described with a species of repugnance, because it is exceedingly disappointing not to have been able to make it familiar to the public before its copies had robbed the place of all charm and novelty.

Their joviality grew every moment greater. Wilhelm and Laertes seized their rapiers and began to practise the duel-scene, which in Hamlet has so tragical an ending. They had formed the project of acting the play among themselves, and our friend had been chosen for the part of the Danish Prince. The others formed a circle about them; they fought with the utmost energy, and the

interest of the spectators grew with every onslaught. Suddenly the company was thrown into the greatest alarm; for a shot was fired from the nearest bushes, followed by another. As they turned round, they saw armed men hurrying towards the place where the horses were feeding not far from the heavily-laden carriages.

The women raised a general outcry; our heroes flung down the rapiers and seized their swords, ran towards the robbers, shouting to them to stand still and render satisfaction for their presumption. As the only answer given was a couple of musket-shots, Wilhelm fired his pistol at a man who had climbed on the carriage and was busy cutting the cords which fastened the luggage. He hit him truly, so that he tumbled down at once, and as Laertes had also not missed his aim, they both seized their side-arms and with flashing sabres boldly met their assailants, part of whom now rushed upon them with oaths and shouts, firing several shots as they advanced. Our young heroes bore themselves valorously, crying to their companions to stand by them and stirring up their courage. But Wilhelm soon lost the sight of day and all consciousness of what was going on about him. Wounded by a shot which struck him between breast and shoulder, and by a sword cut, which cleft his hat and almost penetrated to the skull, he fell to the ground, and only gathered the unhappy ending of the attack from the subsequent narratives of others.

On reopening his eyes he found himself in the most wonderful condition. The first object he could perceive through the sort of twilight which still obscured his vision was the face of Philina, bending closely over his own. He was too weak to rise, and on attempting to do so felt that he was lying in Philina's lap, into which he sank back again. She sat upon the ground, and had gently pressed the head of the outstretched young man against her body, providing him, so far as she could, an easy couch in her arms. Mignon was kneeling with dishevelled and blood-stained hair at his feet, which she embraced with many tears. For the affectionate little creature, seeing him wounded, and not knowing

how else to staunch the blood, had used her own hair to stop up the wounds of her master and father, but had soon been obliged to desist from the vain attempt. Afterwards they were bound up with fungus and moss, for which purpose Philina had surrendered her neck-cloth and apron.

Wilhelm noticed that Philina was sitting with her back against her trunk, which had the appearance of being securely locked and in good condition. He enquired whether the others had been so fortunate as to preserve their belongings? This question she answered with a shrug of the shoulders and a glance towards the grassy meadow, upon which broken boxes, smashed trunks, ripped-up portmanteaux and a multitude of small objects lay scattered about. The place was void of all signs of human life, and the singular group which we have described found itself alone in the midst of this solitude.

Wilhelm now learned more than he liked to hear. Those who might have resisted soon lost heart and were overpowered; a part took to flight, others watched the struggle in terror, while the drivers, who for their horses' sake held out most stoutly, had finally been rendered helpless, and in a very brief space of time everything had been plundered and carried off. The agonized travellers, as soon as all fear of their lives was over, hurried off to the nearest village with utmost speed, bearing the slightly wounded Laertes with them, but only succeeded in rescuing a few scanty ruins of their treasured possessions. The harper had leaned his damaged instrument against a tree, and hurried off with the rest to the village, that, with all possible speed, he might fetch a surgeon to relieve the benefactor whom he left behind, believing him to be dead.

SIXTH BOOK

CHAPTER I

OUR three unhappy adventurers meanwhile remained waiting and expectant for a long time in the singular condition in which we left them at the end of our last Book. No one hastened to their assistance, evening drew darkly on, and Philina's indifference began to change into anxiety. Mignon ran to and fro, and with every moment the child's impatience increased. Finally, as their wishes seemed on the point of fulfilment, and they heard men approaching, a new terror alarmed them. They perceived quite distinctly that a body of horsemen was climbing the path by which they had come, and imagined nothing else than that a fresh band of such uninvited guests as often visited this wooded spot was coming to glean what the first had left. How pleasantly, therefore, were they surprised when the figure of a woman, mounted on a white horse, soon met their eyes through the bushes, accompanied by an elderly gentleman and several cavaliers. Grooms and servants followed after.

Philina opened her eyes wide at this apparition, and was about to cry out to the fair amazon and beg her assistance, when the latter cast her eyes with amazement upon the singular group and turned her horse towards them, halted and remained standing. She asked eagerly after the wounded man, whose position in the lap of the thoughtless Samaritan struck her as very peculiar.

"Is he your husband?" she enquired of Philina.

"He is merely a good friend," replied she in a tone extremely unpleasant to Wilhelm.

He had fastened his eyes on the gentle, calm and sympathising features of the new arrival, and thought he had never beheld anything so lovely. Her figure was concealed from his gaze by a wide man's cloak,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

which suited her well. Apparently she had borrowed this from one of her attendants as a protection against the night air.

Meanwhile her knightly companions had also drawn nearer, and some had dismounted. The lady did the same and enquired with humane interest about the circumstances of the mishap which had befallen our travellers, and the wounds of the stripling lying before her, after which she turned round and walked to one side with the elderly gentleman towards some carriages which were slowly ascending the mountain and now came to a halt upon the open forest-clearing.

After standing a short time at the door of one of these carriages and speaking with the new arrivals, the young lady returned to our wounded hero with a man of short stature who had also descended. By the little box which he carried in his hand, and his leather instrument-case, it was clear that he was a surgeon. His manners, however, were more coarse than polished, but he had a light hand, and his aid was welcome.

After careful probing he declared there was no danger, and that he would bind up the wounded man sufficiently for transport to the nearest village. All bore their part in the work, but the young lady was most active. "Look," she said, after pacing backwards and forwards several times, when the old gentleman led her up once more; "look how they have mishandled him! and he is suffering on our account!"

The patient, who heard these words, did not know what she meant. She continued walking restlessly to and fro, seeming unable to drag herself from the sight of the wounded man, yet at the same time afraid of offending against propriety if she remained until they began, though with difficulty, to undress him. The surgeon was just cutting away his left sleeve when the old gentleman again approached and spoke of the necessity of pushing on with their journey. Wilhelm kept his eyes fixed upon her, and was so absorbed in her glances that he hardly felt what was being done to him.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

Philina had risen to kiss the lady's hand, and a sense of disgust arose in our friend's mind at seeing so unchaste a creature approach and even touch this noble nature. The lady asked Philina several questions, which Wilhelm could not hear. At last she turned to the old gentleman, who stood with frigid glances beside her, and said: "My dear uncle, may I be generous at your expense?" Therewith she removed the mantle, evidently intending to wrap it around the wounded and half-clad man. Wilhelm, whom the healing sight of her lovely eyes had hitherto held captive, now, as the cloak fell from her shoulders, first perceived with wonder the beauty of her form. She stepped nearer and handed him the cloak, which she gently laid over him. At this moment, just as he wished to open his mouth to utter a few words of thanks, so singularly did the vivid impression of her presence react upon his excited senses that he suddenly seemed to behold her head surrounded by a halo of light, which gradually spread around her whole figure. At that instant the surgeon, attempting to remove the ball which had lodged in his flesh, began to handle him more roughly. The angel vanished from his fainting eyes, he lost all consciousness, and when he again came to himself, horsemen and carriages, with the fair lady and all her attendants, had disappeared.

CHAPTER II

As soon as our friend had been bandaged and dressed, the surgeon hastened away, at the same time that a servant, who had been sent back by the gentry, arrived with a number of peasants. They quickly constructed a litter of branches cut from the trees, interwoven with twigs, upon which they hoisted the wounded man and gently carried him down the hill.

The harper, who had also returned, assisted them. The other people dragged Philina's heavy box, she herself

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

walking softly behind with several bundles, while Mignon first ran on in front and then skipped beside them through the bushes, casting longing side-glances towards her sick protector. He reclined quietly upon the litter wrapped in his warm mantle.

An electrical warmth seemed to penetrate from its soft wool into his body, and indeed to transport him into the most delightful sensations. From his earliest youth he could not remember any impression so agreeable as that which the lovely owner of this garment had made upon him. Still he seemed to behold the cloak fall from her shoulders, and that noblest of forms stand before him enveloped in a cloud of glory, while his spirit pursued the vanished one through every quarter of the earth.

Thus their procession reached the inn, where they found the greater part of our company in a condition of despair over their losses. The single small room of the house was packed with people. Some lay upon the rushes, others had taken possession of the benches, and a few had squeezed themselves behind the stove. Madame Melina anxiously awaited their arrival in a poor chamber, for fright and the rough handling she had suffered threatened to precipitate her expected confinement. When the new arrivals entered and wished for room, a general murmuring arose, and they were greeted with scorn and discontent, for now everybody remembered only too well that it was on Wilhelm's advice and under his leadership that they had undertaken this dangerous journey, and exposed themselves to such disaster.

All united in casting the blame of so evil an issue upon him. They even resisted his entrance through the door and demanded that he should lodge elsewhere. To Philina they said plainly it would do her no harm to spend a night in the street.

And it might even have ended so had not the servant, whom his distinguished masters had strictly enjoined to care for the deserted ones, mingled in the strife and summarily ended it.

With mighty oaths and threatenings he declared that

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

he would fling them all out of doors if they did not squeeze themselves together more closely and make room for his charge. Upon so vigorous an address they quickly accommodated themselves, and prepared Wilhelm a bed on a table, which the man pushed into a corner. Philina had her box placed beside it, and seated herself upon it. Each one packed himself in as well as possible, while the servant went off to see if he could not find elsewhere more comfortable quarters for the married couple (for which he held them). Scarcely was he gone before the murmuring broke out afresh more loudly than ever, and reproach followed on reproach. Each began to detail his own losses, with reflections upon the rashness which had caused them such damage.

Nor was there any lack of spiteful satisfaction at our friend's wounds, and as for Philina, they hesitated not to rail with bitter fury against the manner in which she had rescued her box, which they regarded as a crime. From sundry allusions and invective it became evident that, immediately after the defeat and subsequent plundering, she had consented to take a walk with the leader of the marauders into the thicket, and that he afterwards secured the recovery of her things. They made themselves merry over moral conduct and denial, affirming that she had managed to singe his moustache and extract a high price for her favours. To all of this she answered not a word, but rattled the great locks of her trunk, to convince of its presence those who showed such anger, and thus inflame their desperation at their own loss.

CHAPTER III

ALTHOUGH enfeebled by serious loss of blood and severe pain, Wilhelm had been softened and tranquilised by the appearance of his rescuing angel; yet was at last unable any longer to restrain his indignation at these hard and unjust speeches, which, as he preserved silence, were

continually renewed by the discontented company. Feeling soon strong enough to sit up and rebuke the indecency with which they thus distressed their friend and leader, he lifted up his bandaged eye and, though supporting himself with some difficulty, commenced to address them as follows :

“ On the ground of your pain at the loss which each has suffered I can excuse you for insulting me at a moment when you ought to pity me, and for rejecting and casting me from you the very first time I expect or require your help. I never dreamed of demanding thanks for any service or kindness. Do not tempt me then, do not constrain my thoughts to go back and ponder all I have done for you. The recapitulation would be too painful. An accident first led me to you, circumstances and my own inner fancy kept me with you, I have shared your labours and your pleasures, and gladly placed at your disposal my limited knowledge of the lovely art which you pursue, and in which I hope you may perfect yourselves and be successful. Now that you bitterly blame me for the mischance which has overtaken us, you fail to remember that the first suggestion to adopt this route came from others, and not from me alone, but was agreed to by you all. Had our journey been happily completed, each would have boasted of the lucky inspiration which led him to propose this road, would have said that he preferred it. He would then have remembered our consultation and his own vote with satisfaction. But now you hold me alone responsible, and force a blame upon me which I would willingly accept, did not my innermost consciousness proclaim me blameless, yea, though I were unable to appeal to yourselves. If you have anything to say in reply, produce it decently, and I shall know how to defend myself. But if you have no well-grounded charges to make, then hold your peace and do not torment me just when I most need rest.”

In place of answer the girls all began afresh to catalogue their losses. Melina was quite beside himself, for truly he had suffered most severely. He stamped about the

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

narrow room like a madman, bumped his head against the wall, swore and cursed in the most unseemly manner, and on the midwife stepping out of the adjoining room to bring news that his wife had been delivered of a dead child, he gave way to an outbreak of the utmost violence, while the rest unanimously chimed in and howled, screamed, growled and quarrelled one with the other.

Wilhelm, who, while deeply sympathising with their condition, was nevertheless sorely hurt by their base and petty temper, felt stirred to his inmost soul, and in spite of bodily feebleness still preserved the full vigour of his mind.

"You almost compel me to despise you," he exclaimed, "no matter how pitiable may be your lot! No misfortune can justify us in loading an innocent person with reproach. If I have participated in this false step, do I not also share its punishment? Here I lie wounded, and though the company has lost, yet no small proportion of that loss falls upon me. Whatever has been stolen of our wardrobe, or damaged of our decorations, you owed to me, Mr. Melina, and I hereby declare you absolved from that debt!"

Melina evinced but little satisfaction at this declaration, for he bethought him of the handsome clothes he had acquired from the Count's own wardrobe, which fitted him so well, and of the fashionable buckles, watch, hats, ready cash and many other fine things he had lost. The others, casting envious glances on Philina's box, indelicately hinted that he had done well to associate himself with this fair lady, and through her good luck to rescue also his own chattels.

"Do you imagine then," cried he, "that I will call anything my own so long as you are in want! Is this the first time I have honestly shared with you in your hour of need? Let the box be opened, and whatever therein is mine I will resign for the general necessity."

"It is *my* box," cried Philina, "and I will not open it until I please. The few trifles which you gave me to take care of would not go far, even though I sold them

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

to the most honest of Jews. Think of yourself a little, of what your cure may cost, and what you may encounter in a strange country."

"Surely, Philina," replied Wilhelm, "you would not retain anything that is mine, and I know fairly well how far it will go. Truly it is not very much, but at least enough to save us from present embarrassments. But there is more in a man than mere cash, wherewith to stand by his friends, and all that lies in my power shall be devoted to these miserable folks, who, when they come to their right senses, will certainly regret their present conduct. Yes," continued he, "I feel that your need is great, and whatever I possess I will give you, if only you will have a little confidence in me, such as, I think, I have deserved during the time we have been together. Accept this promise from me as your consolation for the moment! Which of you will receive it now in the name of all?"

He held out his hand, saying: "Yes, I promise that I will not leave you, will not forsake you until each has gained twice or thrice as much as he has now lost, until the position in which you have been placed, no matter by whose fault, shall have been entirely forgotten and exchanged for a far better."

Once more he stretched out his hand; but no one would take it. "Again I promise!" he cried, sinking back upon his cushions. All remained silent; all were ashamed, but not comforted, while Philina, still seated upon her box, commenced cracking nuts, a store of which she had found in her pocket.

CHAPTER IV

THE servant returned with several people, and made preparations for removing the wounded man. He had persuaded the pastor of the village to receive the stranger and care for him. He also carried off Philina's box,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

and found it quite natural that she too should follow. Mignon joined them, and the invalid was transported to the parsonage, where a wide double bed, long reserved for guests and special friends, was assigned him. Here it was first discovered that the wound had opened afresh and bled freely. New bandages had to be procured. The patient fell into a state of fever, which grew worse as the night advanced. Philina nursed him faithfully, and, when worn out with weariness, was relieved by the harper. Mignon, though firmly resolved to keep awake, fell asleep in a corner. Next morning, feeling somewhat better, the sick man asked to see the servant, of whom he had been told that he only waited for his awakening to ride away. From this man he learned that the distinguished party which had yesterday come to his help had quitted their own estates to escape the military movements and settle in a safer district. He mentioned the names of the elder gentleman and his niece, as well as the place where they proposed to settle for the future, and also informed Wilhelm that the young lady had given him orders to make provision for the forsaken youth. He had already summoned a surgeon from the neighbouring town, and as soon as he knew that his wounded charge was properly bandaged, proposed to mount and ride after his employers. The surgeon's entrance interrupted the very hearty expressions of gratitude which Wilhelm was charging the servant to convey. The former found that the wound was not dangerous, and the contusion on his head of little consequence; but he insisted emphatically that his patient should keep quiet and take care of himself.

After the servant had ridden away, Philina, who came back at once, related that he had left a purse behind containing twenty louis d'or, had liberally paid their host for three or four weeks in advance, and earnestly charged her to nurse the patient. This she the more willingly promised because the stranger had taken her for Wilhelm's wife, under which title she now begged

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

to introduce herself. She proceeded to serve tea, and made all the preparations of a nurse.

"Philina," said Wilhelm, "I owe you already so many thanks in connection with this misfortune that has befallen us, that I should not like to increase my indebtedness towards you. I feel uneasy so long as you are about me, for I do not know how I can ever repay all your trouble. Give me my things which are packed in your box, attach yourself to the rest of the company, seek some other quarters, and take my thanks and the gold watch as a slight acknowledgement; but leave me, for your presence disturbs me more than you can think."

She laughed in his face when he had done. "You are a silly fellow!" she said, "and will never have sense. I know better what is good for you, and shall stay. I will not budge from the spot! I have never reckoned on gratitude from men, and therefore not on yours; and if I like you, what business is that of yours?"

She soon ingratiated herself into favour with the pastor and his family, for she was always merry, free in her bounties to all, understood how to humour everybody, and contrived thereby to do just as she liked.

Wilhelm, the while, fared not at all badly. The surgeon, an honest and capable man, speedily brought him on the fair way to recovery, and on this side we should not need to trouble much more about him, were it not that fresh afflictions from another side now threatened to arise, and new cares to oppress.

CHAPTER V

MIGNON had been very quiet for several days, and when urged to give the reason, confessed at last that her right arm had been dislocated. "You have to thank your own imprudence for that," said Philina, and proceeded to recount how, seeing her friend in danger, the child had drawn her hunting knife and valiantly assailed the free-

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

booters, until at last one of them seized her by the arm and flung her on one side. They scolded her for having concealed her hurt for so long, but soon discovered that she had been prompted by a fear lest the surgeon, who took her for a boy, should find out her true sex. She was duly attended to, and now had to carry her arm in a sling.

This she resented the more because she was thus compelled to resign the greater part of the nursing and attendance to Philina, which the pretty sinner performed all the more sedulously.

One morning, when Wilhelm awoke, he found himself in strange proximity to her. During his sleep he had slipped quite to the further side of his wide couch, and Philina lay diagonally across the nearer side, having apparently fallen asleep while sitting on the bed. A book had fallen from her hand, and she had sunk back with her head close to his breast, over which her blonde and dishevelled hair lay scattered in a stream. The disorder of sleep enhanced her charms more than any art or design, and the smiling calm of childhood hovered about her face. For a time he gazed upon her, and seemed to blame himself for the pleasure with which he beheld her, yea, we cannot tell whether he blessed or cursed his present condition, which forbade the slightest movement. Perhaps indeed he made some such effort, and not very skilfully, for she soon stirred and then awoke, whereupon he softly closed his eyes, so as not to betray that he had found her in this position. Nevertheless he could not forbear to peep at her beneath his eyelids, as she tidied herself and then went away to prepare breakfast.

Wilhelm several times caused enquiries to be made about Mrs. Melina and the rest of the company, and his messengers had always been uncivilly received. "That is no wonder," said Philina, "for I hear that the servant gave them money also. When they have spent it, they will be more approachable." And in fact Melina came a few days later, and announced with an air of pretended indifference that he had now determined to continue his

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

journey with the company. Without much formality he demanded an advance from Wilhelm, which he would repay as soon as they met again at H——.

Wilhelm consented to the proposal, and Philina, much against her will, had to get out the purse. She was angry when Wilhelm required her to depart with the rest, while Melina, on the other hand, declared that he would not take her with him. Only for a few brief moments did she lose her equanimity, but quickly recovered herself and said jestingly: "I don't need either of you, and will manage to find my way without you."

Several more came, one after the other, to take leave of Wilhelm, and on asking after the giddy youth, whom we have learned to know in the guise of a wig-maker, he heard that he had vanished from the forest-clearing and had not since reappeared. Meanwhile the company's departure was further delayed a few days, because first this and then the other was lacking.

One morning Mignon brought Wilhelm news to bed that Philina had departed in the night. All his own property had been very tidily laid together in the adjoining room, and the people of the house said she stopped the post-wagon as it passed the door that morning, placed her box upon it, and had ridden away. With good reason he was glad to be thus rid of her, and did not give much more thought to the matter. Far more strongly did his thoughts and imaginations cleave to that other object, which more than ever so delightfully occupied them.

Incessantly he recalled the events of that day, which had made so ineffaceable an impression on his mind. He beheld the lovely amazon advance riding from the thicket, saw how she approached, dismounted, became active on his behalf and then paced to and fro. Now he watched the enveloping garment fall from her shoulders, saw how her form glistened and vanished. A thousand times his imagination repeated the scene; a thousand times he recalled the sweet tones of her voice, and each time envied Philina, who had kissed her hand, and equally often would he have held the story for a dream, a mere myth, were not

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

the garment itself left behind to assure him that the apparition was real.

Along with the utmost care for this cloak there went also an earnest longing to clothe himself withal. Each morning on rising he turned it over, and went all day long in fear lest it should contract a spot or stain by being worn.

The company duly set out, and he let them go under the impression that he was not yet able to attempt the journey, though in his heart he cherished quite other intentions.

Two only remained with him: the harper whom he needed, and Mignon whom he could not do without.

CHAPTER VI

HE had thought out a plan for himself. First he would seek out the party who had helped him in his need, in order to express to them his gratitude. Then he proposed to follow the company, that he might, according to promise, secure them as far as possible the favour of his friend the director in H——. Daily the longing to behold again his fair deliverer grew greater, and he resolved to take the shortest route to her presence. He took counsel with the pastor as to the situation of the place chosen by the noble family as its abode during the war, and as to whether it were possible to obtain news of them from any other quarter. The clergyman, a man of good education, turned over the pages of Büsching's Geography, studied the map and consulted sundry genealogical works, but could find no such place throughout the whole of Lower Saxony, nor yet any similar family name in the entire aristocracy of the Empire.

The longer this search lasted, the greater became Wilhelm's impatience, and his disquiet changed finally into dismay when the harper informed him that he had reason to suspect the servant, whatever his motive, had purposely hidden the name of his masters and given a

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

false one. The old man was commissioned to follow their track, but this only prolonged the period of hope for a few days, as he came back bringing no satisfactory news.

The active movement and commotion of the war had brought so many parties of riders through the neighbouring villages that little notice had been taken of this particular one, which also, as it appeared, had traversed a considerable stretch of road that very night, so that the good old detective could find no trace, still less follow it up. Indeed, he at last ran the risk of being taken for a Jew and a spy, and was compelled to reappear without olive-leaf before his master and friend. In every way that he could think of he tried to assuage Wilhelm's disappointment, calling to memory all that he had learned from the servant and reviving every supposition to which the man's conversation had afforded ground. But Wilhelm found but little comfort in this, for it supplied nothing on which he might base any guess or conclusion respecting those whom he sought. One single explanation was important, seeing that it helped him to interpret certain obscure observations of the vanished fair one.

The marauding band had in reality not laid in wait for the poor wandering troupe, but for the party of gentlefolks, of whose passage it had been informed. Moreover, from the general position of the opposing armies, it must have made remarkable and forced marches to surprise them at the appointed spot, supposing, of course, that it consisted of real troops, which there was reason to doubt. Luckily for the rich and distinguished party, the poor and insignificant one had reached the place first, and suffered the fate intended for the other. To this fact the words of the young lady, which Wilhelm so distinctly remembered, evidently bore reference. If, therefore, he could feel glad and happy that a kindly provident genius had made him into the sacrifice whereby a perfect mortal had been saved, yet, on the other hand, the thought that he could neither find her, nor gaze upon her face, and must, at

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

least for the moment, entirely relinquish so sweet a hope, brought him almost to the verge of despair.

CHAPTER VII

FOR a few days Wilhelm felt the lack of Philina's presence. He had lost in her a careful nurse and cheerful companion, and was no longer accustomed to be alone. Mignon now did her best to fill the vacancy, for as soon as the frivolous beauty began to encompass the wounded man with her attentions and favour, the little one had held back, silently absorbed in her own thoughts; but now that she held the field to herself, the whole-hearted zeal of her devotion to our friend manifested itself in full ardour, she became eager to serve him and grew merry for his entertainment. Often, too, when he was reading or sunk in thought, she would interrupt with questions as to whether he had parents, brothers or sisters? and what sort of house was his home? He began to answer her, and in the act of recounting these details again felt the situation of his own people, so long banished from thought, and once more desired to communicate with them.

And now the old struggle within him recommenced. He blamed himself and his unpardonable dilatoriness in writing home to give them news of himself; he resolved to do it, and again put it off.

But of return to his own home there could now be no thought. He had business to do in H——; and must await a letter from Melina, feeling himself still under obligation to the whole misdirected company. He debated, meditated, and found a hundred reasons for going thither where his heart drew him. Thus he neglected his natural and inherent duties, while regarding as sacred those whose burden he had wilfully incurred.

And yet much may be said in his excuse, for we must especially not forget that he still secretly sought some

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

trace of Mariana, and hoped perhaps to find this in H——. It is long since we last mentioned this thread, which nevertheless ran through his whole being. Hardly even to himself did he confess this inward longing to find her once again, and beg forgiveness for his harshness. From time to time those earlier dreams reawakened, and with them all his hopes; for indeed it was by his tenderest memories that he felt bound to the theatre, yea, even to this second-rate company. And yet since the appearance of that too-early vanished angel his feelings had taken another direction. To draw near to her, as he so earnestly desired, would be at once to step out of the condition in which he now found himself, so that a divided longing drew him on from one world to another.

To distract these agitated thoughts and give a different turn to his sensations there was no more suitable method than the Shakespearian writings, to which he now devoted himself more closely day by day. Among these "Hamlet" especially riveted attention.

We saw already in the previous Book that he was studying the part of the Prince, and he naturally began with the most powerful passages, the soliloquies and such scenes as possess force of spirit, elevation, animation and breadth of scope, or in which a frank and noble mind expresses itself with tenderness and sensibility. He was even ready to take upon himself the burden of profound melancholy, and so completely did his practice of the part entwine itself with his lonely life, that at last he and Hamlet began to be one and the same person.

Finally, having sufficiently studied the separate passages, he went through the whole in sequence, and found that some parts would not accord. First the character and then the expression seemed contradictory, and our friend found it almost impossible to discover a tone in which the entire rôle, with all its variations and shades, could be played. He laboured long in this labyrinth, until at last he hit upon a way by which he hoped to attain his goal. He now went through the play to see if any special trait of Hamlet's

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

character had been revealed prior to his father's death, and soon believed that he had found one.

Gently and nobly born, this flower of royalty grew up under the direct influences of majesty. The idea of right, and princely dignity, the sentiment of goodness and propriety, and the loftiness of his birth developed concurrently within him ; he was a prince, a born prince, and wished to rule, so that goodness might unhindered continue to be good. Agreeable in form, by nature courteous and kindly of heart, a pattern of young manhood, the joy of the world, without a single conspicuous passion, his love for Ophelia was a silent premonition of Nature's sweet demands, and his zeal for knightly accomplishments was sharpened by praise accorded to a rival. He recognised an honourable man, and knew the value of the repose which an upright spirit enjoys on the bosom of an upright friend. Up to a certain point he had learned to acknowledge and prize the good and beautiful in art and science. Vulgarity was an offence to him, and if in his gentle soul hatred could find a lodgement, it was only sufficient to make him despise and scornfully play with fickle, false or foolish courtiers.

Serene in temper, simple in manners, neither at ease in idleness nor too anxious for occupation, half spoiled by academic dawdling, more given to mirth of caprice than of heart, a good boon companion, pliant, modest and solicitous, more ready to forget an injury done to himself than an offence against honesty, goodness and propriety.

Having gathered all these characteristics together and mated them with appropriate passages, Wilhelm found his comprehension of the whole much facilitated, but now foresaw that he would henceforth have to treat a large portion of the text otherwise than as he had hitherto recited it.

During this work evening had approached, and unconsciously the image of his beneficent beauty again floated before his fancy ; he indulged in the sweetest imaginations, and a yearning passion rushed upon him such as his bosom had never before experienced.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

Mignon and the old man had for some time been singing to the harp in the adjoining room, when suddenly an unfamiliar melody caught his attention. Mignon was singing :

“None but the longing heart
My grief can measure !
Alone, and far apart
From every pleasure
Mine eyes I thither dart,
Where lies my treasure.

“Ah ! who me loves at heart
Roams far at leisure,
I dizzy am, and smart
With inward pressure.
Ah ! whoso longs at heart !
Only the longing heart
My grief can measure.”

CHAPTER VIII

THE tender allurements of his beloved guardian angel could not lead our friend back to the right road. The unrest which racked his soul was only stimulated by this song. A secret glow ran through his veins, fixed and fleeting objects alternated within his mind, exciting it to irresistible desire. He longed first for a steed and now for wings, and while feeling the impossibility of remaining inactive, for the first time looked about him to see whither he should go.

So many entanglements had disarranged the thread of his fate, which now at last must either become ever more confused, or be finally unravelled. Frequently, on hearing the trot of a horse or the rattle of a carriage, he looked quickly out of the window, in hope that it might be someone seeking him and bearing, even though it were only by chance, some news, some certainty, some joy. He invented a hundred tales of how his brother-in-law Werner might visit the district and surprise him,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

or of how Mariana might possibly appear. Every post-horn that sounded (for the main road ran through the village) set him in activity. But the likeliest event was that Melina might send intelligence of his own fortune; while his thoughts still found their pleasantest occupation in imagining that the servant might come again and reveal the abode of the incomparable beauty. This thought it was which, without his exactly knowing it, held him chained to the wretched place.

One delicious imagination followed the other, until his mind was led through a series of pictures and observations back to one subject, which grew ever more repulsive and unbearable the more minutely it was considered. This was the thought of his own unhappy career as the leader of an army, a matter which gave him much pain. For although on the evening of that unlucky day he had spoken out his mind pretty fully to the company, yet to himself he could not deny his error, and felt constrained to lay the blame on his own shoulders. He had inspired confidence in himself, directed the will of the others, and, misled by inexperience and rashness, led the way. They boldly followed, and disaster had overtaken them such as they were unable to face. Reproaches, loud and silent, followed him; and now that he had promised the misguided company never to forsake them until he had replaced with usury what they had lost, this was but another act of imprudence, whereby he presumptuously took upon his own shoulders a general and individual evil. It was not alone suspense, caprice or momentary perplexity that now weighed upon him. The generous outstretching of his hand, which no one would grasp, was not a mere light formality as regarded the oath he had sworn to them in his heart, and he pored over ways and means of being useful and advantageous to them, and no matter how manifold the forms these projects took, they were far from sufficing to roll the weight from his spirit, which in his hours of depression lay so heavy upon it.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

His thoughts might have continued to revolve in this wonderful circle, and he, like a captive, have trodden its weary round much longer, had not a letter from Melina awakened him from his dreams and summoned him to H——. The poor fellow found himself in very straitened circumstances, for the director would have nothing to do with him or his following. If therefore anything was to be effected, it could only be through Wilhelm's personal presence. So he forthwith set out with his two companions, and the singular triumvirate speedily arrived at the busy port of industry, where further strange occurrences lay in wait for them.

Wilhelm hurried at once to visit his old friend Serlo, as we will name the director.

The latter received him with open arms, exclaiming from afar: "My dear Meister, is it you that I see? is it you that I recognise?"

"Softly!" replied Wilhelm, embracing him, "my name now is Geselle, and only under this name have I been able to appear."

"Good, my friend," said Serlo, examining the newly arrived. "You have scarcely altered at all. Is your love for the noblest of all arts as strong and keen as ever? I am so pleased at your coming that I almost forget how much reason I have to grumble at you."

"How so?" answered Wilhelm, who had a shrewd guess whither this address would tend.

"You have not treated me like a good Geselle ('comrade'), but handled me in your last letter like some great lord to whom one may with good conscience recommend unserviceable people. You forget that we have to earn our bread. Your Melina with his tribe is verily of no use whatever."

On Wilhelm attempting to say something in their favour Serlo began so merciless a description of them, that our friend was greatly relieved when a woman entered the room and interrupted the conversation, who was at once introduced as his friend's sister Aurelia. This admirable woman, a young widow, received him

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

with great kindness, and her conversation was so agreeable that he did not immediately notice the obvious marks of trouble which overspread her intellectual countenance. They talked of the latest plays and the present taste. From one topic they passed to another, and Wilhelm failed not to mention his "Hamlet" as one in which he was very deeply occupied. Serlo declared that he would gladly have played the rôle of Polonius, and observed to his sister: "And you, I suppose, would take Ophelia?" The smile with which he said it displeased Wilhelm, as it seemed to have about it something offensive.

Aurelia calmly and coldly replied: "And why not?"

In his usual style Wilhelm began to grow prolix and very learned, expounding how he would have his "Hamlet" played.

He fully detailed the results which we saw him so busy collecting in the last chapter, and in spite of the doubts which Serlo attempted to cast upon his hypothesis, took the utmost trouble to render his view acceptable.

"Very good," said the latter at last. "Let us grant all that you say; what further explanation would you deduce from it?"

"Much! much!" answered Wilhelm. "Imagine a prince such as I have described, whose father unexpectedly dies. Ambition and love of rule are not the passions which inspire him. He had been so contented as the son of a king, and now for the first time sees himself obliged to observe the gulf which separates the monarch from the subject. The right to the throne was not hereditary; and yet his father's longer life would have strengthened the claims of an only son, and indicated him as the future king. On the other hand, he feels himself so poor in favour and possessions, so strange to that which from youth he had regarded as his property; and it is here that his mind first takes on a tinge of melancholy; he feels that he is no more than any other nobleman, and

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

becomes the servant of all, not courteously nor with condescension; no, as though degraded, indigent.

"He looks back upon his former condition merely as upon a vanished dream. It is in vain that his uncle tries to cheer him up, to show him his position from another standpoint; there remains for him only the consciousness of his nothingness.

"The second blow which struck him wounded more deeply, bent him yet lower. This was his mother's marriage. To him, the true and tender son, a mother had still been left after the father's death. In honouring the heroic form of the great departed he felt he could do it in company with a bereaved, noble and faithful mother. But her he loses now, loses her more cruelly than by death. The authentic picture which every well-bred child so gladly paints of its parents vanishes. No help is to be found with the dead, and with the living no support. She also is a woman! She too is concluded in the universal sex-name of 'frailty.'

"Now for the first time he feels himself truly humbled; now first realises that he is an orphan, and no worldly happiness can henceforth restore what he has lost. By nature he is neither sad nor meditative; but this sadness, these meditations grow to be a heavy burden. And it is thus that we see him appear. I do not think I exaggerate."

Serlo glanced at his sister and said: "Have I given you a false portrait of our friend? He has made a good start, and will yet tell us much and persuade us of many things."

Wilhelm protested vigorously that he did not wish to persuade but to convince them, and only begged for a little longer patience. "Try to form for yourself a vivid picture of this youth, this king's son, place yourself in his position, and then watch him as he learns that his father's ghost had appeared. Stand by him on that awful night when the venerable spirit itself arises before him! A dreadful horror seizes him, he addresses the mysterious form; it beckons; he follows, and hears—what does he hear? The most horrible charge against his uncle! the challenge to revenge, and the earnestly repeated prayer:

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

‘Remember me!’ And when the ghost has vanished, whom do we see before us? A young hero snorting for vengeance? A prince by birth, happy to be twice and thrice summoned to draw his sword upon the usurper of his crown? No! amazement and melancholy overtake him, and he swears not to forget the departed father. He grows bitter over the smiling villains, and ends with the significant sigh:—

‘The time is out of joint—O cursèd spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!’

“These words seem to me to contain the key to Hamlet’s entire course of action, and it is clear to me that Shakespeare wished to signify that a great task had been imposed upon a soul not strong enough for its performance.

“And this is what I see perfectly carried out through the whole play. I see an oak-tree planted in a precious vase, intended only to bear upon its lap exquisite flowers. The roots expand, and the vase is shattered.

“A lovely, pure, noble and highly moral being, but lacking the sensuous strength which makes the hero, sinks beneath the weight of a burden which it can neither carry nor cast off. All duty to him is sacred, but this one is too heavy. An impossibility is required of him; not indeed impossible to man; no, but impossible for him! See how he turns and twists, torments himself, advances, retreats, is ever reminded, ever reminds himself, and finally almost lets his purpose slip from memory, yet without ever knowing what true happiness means.”

CHAPTER IX

THEIR conversation was interrupted by several persons who came in one after the other. These were virtuosi and actors, whose very various opinions agreed in the one point, that each liked to live after his own fashion.

A young and excellent clarionet-player named Philibert entered the room, much annoyed and excited because the public had not done justice to his friend, a skilled ’celloist,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

as he believed him to be. "The man was his friend," he exclaimed, "and no cabal should crush him. He would never play another note himself unless the other were also heard and paid."

Tarconi, a learned composer, and several actors helped to swell the company, and as each was only accustomed to talk about himself, the conversation soon became general, though the sudden changes of topic seemed all the more singular. At last Horatio, the popular violinist, entered. The lofty stature and beauty of his person delighted all who beheld him, while his gentleness of disposition, combined with a manly dignity, opened all hearts to him, and when he seized his instrument one forgave Raphael for having represented his Apollo with a violin instead of a lyre. Of a retired nature, he was a man of few words, and his whole soul seemed to float only above the strings and about the spirit which slumbered therein, longing to awaken it and invite it to secret converse with his own. Under the magic of this converse, which he only knew in all its fulness when alone with a few choice spirits, the hearts of his listeners were melted, and the mere echo of the harmony which filled his whole being thrilled them with rapture.

Last of all Melina also entered, in demeanour and dress the most miserable figure, looking as though the very utmost he could do was to take notes of the life of the others, of their skilfulness and impertinence, their arrogance and discontent, their follies and weaknesses.

But Aurelia seemed to take but little share in all that went on. Indeed she soon led our friend into a side-apartment, where, stepping to the window and gazing upwards at the starry heavens, she said: "You have still a good deal more to tell us about Hamlet; and I should not like to rob my brother of these other good things which you have to expound. So let us leave Hamlet, and talk to me of Ophelia."

"There is not much to be said of her," replied Wilhelm. "although her image is drawn by a few strokes from a master hand."

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

“Ripe, sweet sensuousness ! Her fancy for the Prince, to whose hand she may reasonably aspire, is so inconsiderately left to itself that both father and brother are afraid, and give her warning. Like the flimsy gauze upon her bosom, propriety cannot hide the movements of her heart, and becomes rather her betrayer. Her imagination is infected, in silent modesty she breathes desire and love, and should the accommodating goddess Opportunity but shake the tree, the fruit will fall.”

“And then,” said Aurelia, “when she beholds herself forsaken, cast off, deserted ; sees the highest transformed to the basest in the soul of her insane lover, and he offers her the bitter cup of sorrow in place of love’s delicious goblet ——”

“Her heart breaks,” answered Wilhelm, “the whole framework of her being is unhinged ; then follows the death of her father, and the lovely edifice entirely collapses.”

Wilhelm had not observed the singular emphasis with which Aurelia uttered her last words. Whenever art was the topic of discourse, he thought only of the work itself and of its perfection, not of the effect it produces on men, each of whom feels, both with and afterwards, in the fate of another, and sees in the artist’s pictures only his own sorrow, his own joy.

Aurelia still stood with her head supported on her arms, and her tear-dimmed eyes turned heavenwards. For a long time she restrained her grief until it could no longer be concealed. Then, seizing the astonished youth by the hands, she exclaimed : “Forgive me ! forgive an agonized heart ! Society constrains and oppresses me, and in presence of my merciless brother I must endeavour to hide my feelings. Your presence has broken every bond. My friend !” she cried, “until a moment ago a stranger, and already my confidant !” She could scarcely utter the words, and now sank upon his shoulder. “Do not think worse of me,” she added sobbing, “for unbosoming myself so soon to you, and because you see me so weak ! Become my friend and remain so ! for I deserve it !” He spoke to

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

her with the utmost tenderness of voice, but all in vain ! Her tears continued to flow and choked her utterance.

At this moment someone opened the door. The unwelcome form of Serlo entered, and with him the equally unexpected figure of Philina, whom he led by the hand. "Here is your friend," said Serlo to her, pointing to Wilhelm ; "he will be glad to greet you."

"What," cried Wilhelm in amazement, "do I see you here ?" She advanced modestly towards him with composure, and welcomed him, extolling Serlo's kindness, who out of mere hope, and without any merit on her part, had taken her into his admirable company, and behaving with much friendliness to Wilhelm, yet with a certain respectful reserve. This dissimulation, however, only lasted so long as the others were in the room. Aurelia departed to hide her sorrow, and Serlo was called away. After looking carefully to the doors to see if they were really gone, Philina skipped like a mad thing around the room, sat down on the floor and seemed as though she would choke with merriment and laughter. Then she sprang to her feet, flattered our friend, and rejoiced beyond all measure at her own shrewdness in going on ahead to explore the ground and find a nest for herself.

"Things are lively here," said she, "just as I like them. Aurelia has had an unhappy love-affair with the Baron J——, who is said to be young, rich, handsome and clever, and, if I am not woefully mistaken, he has left her a memorial behind. If it's a good likeness, then the papa must be a wonderfully fine looking man. She has a boy about three years of age, and beautiful as the sun. As a rule I cannot bear children, but this youngster delights me. I have reckoned it all out—the death of her husband, the new acquaintance, and all fits exactly.

"But her friend has gone his own way ; for a whole year he has not seen her, and she is beside herself and quite inconsolable. The fool ! The brother has a dancer in the troupe with whom he is intimate, and several others in the town to whom he pays attention, and now I am on his list. The old fool ! About the rest," and she glanced towards

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

the door, "you shall hear to-morrow. And now a word about Philina, whom you know, the arch fool! She is in love with you!" She swore it was true, and affirmed with much asseveration that it was an excellent joke. She earnestly entreated Wilhelm to fall in love with Aurelia, for not until then would the hunt be in full cry. "She runs after her faithless swain, you after her, I after you, and the brother after me! If that does not provide us with fun enough to last half a year, I will be ready to die at the first episode added to this fourfold complicated romance." She begged him not to spoil the game, and to show her the respect which she intended to earn by her conduct.

CHAPTER X

NEXT morning Wilhelm bethought him to visit Madame Melina, but did not find her at home. On asking after the other members of the wandering company, they also were not to be found. At last he learned that Philina had invited them to breakfast, where he found them all in good condition and high spirits. The quick-witted lass had brought them all together, entertained them to chocolate and given them to understand that their way was not altogether blocked. She trusted by her influence to convince Serlo how advantageous it would be to associate such clever people with his own company. They listened attentively to her speeches, sipped one cup after the other, and found the girl by no means so abominable as a few weeks ago she had appeared. Even after she dismissed them they continued to say nice things about her, and found it to their own advantage to say nothing of those old frivolities.

"Do you believe," said Wilhelm, who had remained alone behind, "that Serlo will ever decide to retain either all or a part of them?"

"Certainly not," answered Philina. "Neither does the question interest me in the least. The sooner they go the

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

better, and I will see how we can best get rid of them. But there is another anxiety troubles me. Oh, if you could only make up your mind to join us, to adopt an art for which you were born, and which will be sure to bring you both honour and ample income ! ”

“ It is not to be thought of,” answered Wilhelm. “ I hope you have not betrayed the fact of my having already been on the stage.”

“ How can you think me capable of such an indiscretion ! ” replied the other.

“ That is well,” said he. “ I rely implicitly upon it, for I am about to resume my own name and visit my father’s friends.”

“ Don’t be in any hurry about it,” responded Philina, and with that they parted.

Wilhelm had asked permission from Serlo to attend their rehearsals, which the latter declined, referring him to the performance itself. “ You must first get to know us from our best side before we can allow you to look into our cards.”

On the following evening he attended the performance with very great satisfaction ; it was the first time he had ever seen the theatre to such perfection. Actors of excellent gifts, happy endowments and industry, who possessed a high conception of their art, and though not all of equal merit, yet mutually sustaining, supporting and inspiring each other. Serlo exhibited himself to great advantage. Gifted with humour and vivacity, controlled by general good taste, one was compelled to admire him from the moment he trod the stage or opened his mouth, and became immediately conscious of the inward ease of his being, a sense of which extended to all his audience. Unusual practice in his art had rendered him skilful and able to express the finest shades of character with utmost facility.

His sister Aurelia was in no degree inferior, and received even greater applause, being able to melt the spirits which he could only delight.

But I refrain from speaking further of her and the other

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

actors ; we shall see them acting and performing, and the reader will be able to judge for himself.

Aurelia enquired for our friend next morning, and he hastened to her, and found her lying on the couch. She seemed to be suffering from headache and slight fever. Her eyes brightened as she saw him enter. "Forgive me," she called ; "the confidence you inspire makes me weak. I cannot any longer keep my secret, my sorrow, to myself, though hitherto I found in them both strength and comfort. All unknowingly you have loosed the bands of silence, and now, without wishing it, will have to take part in the conflict which I wage against myself."

Wilhelm answered kindly and politely, assuring her that during the night her image and her grief had continually floated before his mind, that he begged for her confidence and promised to be her devoted friend.

While speaking these words his eyes were attracted to the boy who sat upon the floor before her, busy with all kinds of toys. He might be about three years old, as Philina had guessed, and Wilhelm now first understood the comparison by which the wanton girl, seldom lofty in her phrases, had likened the child to the sun for beauty. For the loveliest golden locks curled around his large blue eyes and full round face, dark and slightly curved eyebrows marked the dazzling whiteness of his forehead, while the vivid tints of health glowed upon his cheeks.

"Take a seat beside me," said Aurelia. "You look upon the happy child with wonder. Truly I have accepted him with gladness and watch over him with care ; only in him can I fully realise the degree of my grief, because I can but rarely estimate the value of such a gift.

"Allow me," she continued, "to talk now of myself and my fate, for it is of great moment to me not to be misjudged by you. I was hoping for a few moments of calmness, and therefore sent for you. You are here, and I have lost the thread of my thoughts.

"'One more forsaken creature in the world !' you

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

will say. You are a man and will think : ' How strangely she behaves in face of a necessary evil, more certain than death—the faithlessness of a man ! What a fool ! ' O my friend, if mine were a common fate, I would willingly endure my common evil ; but it is so extraordinary. Why cannot I show it you in a mirror : why not charge someone else to tell you its story ! Had I been seduced, surprised, and then, like Ariadne, forsaken, there would be comfort even in despair. But I am in a worse plight, I have circumvented myself, unwittingly deceived myself, and this it is for which I can never forgive myself."

" With such sentiments as you cherish you can never be altogether miserable," answered her friend.

" And do you know to whom I owe these sentiments ? " asked Aurelia. " To the worst possible education by which a girl was ever ruined, to the most evil example by which senses and inclination could be led astray. After the early death of my mother I spent the fairest years of my development with an aunt, who made it a law to despise the laws of honour. Blindly she abandoned herself to every fancy, no matter whether she were the ruler or the slave of its object, provided only she could forget herself in the wildest self-indulgence.

" We children, whose sound glance of innocence saw everything clearly and distinctly, what ideas must we form of the masculine sex ! How dull, impertinent, presumptuous and imbecile was each whom she tempted thither, how sated, insolent and insipid all who had found satisfaction for their desires ! Thus for months together I have seen this woman humbled beneath the rule of the worst of men. What treatment had she not to endure, with what a forehead had she not to adapt herself to her fate, yea, with what a heart to carry her shameful chains !

" Thus it was, my friend, that I learned to know your sex, and how I loathed it, for I beheld, in this intercourse with my own, how otherwise decent men lost every final trace of goodness.

" An elderly friend, who treated me as a daughter,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

completely opened my eyes. I also learned to know my own sex, and truly as a girl of sixteen years was wiser than I am now, when I scarcely understand myself. How is it we are so wise when we are young! so wise, to become afterwards so foolish!"

The boy began to make a noise, and Aurelia grew uneasy. She rang, and an old woman came in to take him away. "Have you still got toothache?" said Aurelia to the old woman, whose face was bound up. "Almost beyond endurance," replied the other in a muffled voice, as she picked up and carried off the boy, who appeared willing to go with her.

No sooner had the child been removed than Aurelia began to weep bitterly. "I can do nothing but cry and lament," she exclaimed, "I am ashamed of myself, to lie like a poor worm before you. My self-possession is gone, and I cannot tell you any more. You shall hear later how a love for art uplifted me, how at first I hoped everything from my nation, and then again began to despair of it." She hesitated and finally grew silent. Her friend, who did not wish to talk in generalities, and knew of nothing else to say, pressed her hand and looked at her for a while. Then in his embarrassment he picked up a book lying on the table; it was Shakespeare's writings, and open at the play of "Hamlet."

Serlo, who just then entered with a brief enquiry as to his sister's condition, glanced into the book which our friend held in his hand, and cried: "So I find you busy with your 'Hamlet' again? That's right! a few doubts have arisen in my mind which seem very much to lessen the canonical character you would so gladly give to the play. How about its plot? especially that of the last two acts, after Hamlet has spoken with his mother? It will neither move nor march, neither serve nor suffice. The English have themselves admitted as much."

Wilhelm answered: "It is possible that some members of a nation possessing such masterpieces may misjudge even the best; but that cannot hinder us from seeing with our own eyes and being just. Far from believing

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

that the plot is to blame, I hold strongly that no greater has ever been devised. Yea, it was not devised, it is so."

"How do you make that out?" asked Serlo.

"I will make nothing out," said Wilhelm, "I will only lay it before you as I have thought it out."

Aurelia rose from her cushions, supporting herself upon her hand, and gazing on our friend, who continued speaking with the fullest assurance of being right.

"It pleases us so well, it flatters us so greatly to behold a hero who acts through himself, who loves and hates when his heart demands it, who undertakes and executes, thrusting all obstacles aside, and attains some lofty purpose. Historians and poets have led us to believe that so proud a fate can befall mankind. But our play teaches otherwise. Here the hero has no plan, but the play has one. Here there is no mere trivial thought of vengeance to be visited upon a crime; no, a tremendous deed is done, which rolls along with all its consequences, bearing the innocent upon its stream. It seems as though it would avoid the abyss for which it is destined, yet plunges headlong into the pit just where it thought to find a way of escape. For this is the quality of evil-doing, that it casts so much wrong upon the innocent, as it is also of good deeds that they bring so much good upon the undeserving, and often without their author being in either case punished or rewarded. How wonderfully this is seen here! The fires of purgatory send forth their ghost to demand vengeance, and yet in vain. Every circumstance conspires to urge vengeance, but in vain! Neither earthly nor infernal powers are able to execute what Fate has reserved for herself alone. The hour of judgement comes. The evil fall with the good! A whole generation is swept away and a new one appears."

After a pause, during which they looked at each other, Serlo took up the argument. "You do not pay Providence any great compliment in thus exalting your poet; and then again you seem to impute to your poet, as other

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

folks to Providence, ultimate ends and designs such as He never cherished."

CHAPTER XI

"LET me also ask a question," said Aurelia. "I have been looking through Ophelia's part again, and am satisfied with it, and under certain circumstances would venture to play it. But tell me: might not the poor insane creature sing some other songs? They might be fragments of ballads, only not such dubious and obscene words. Why should she sing these?"

"My dear friend," answered Wilhelm, "I cannot yield a single iota, for a great meaning lies therein. We see what occupied the good child's thoughts. The tones of lustful desire echoed secretly in her soul, and, like an unwise nurse, she tried to sing her sensuousness to rest with songs, whereby she only rendered it more wakeful. Silently she lived sunk in herself, scarcely concealing her longings and desires. Now that she has lost all command over herself, and her heart floats upon her tongue, this tongue becomes her betrayer, and in the innocence of madness she gloats, even before the King and Queen, over the echo of those wanton songs which had engaged her solitude—such as 'The maiden whose heart was won,' or 'The maid who stole to meet the youth,' and so forth."

He had not yet finished when a remarkable scene was enacted before his eyes, which he could in no way explain.

Serlo had walked several times across the room, and imperceptibly approached Aurelia's dressing-table; suddenly he snatched something lying there and hurried with his booty towards the door. Aurelia, noticing this, sprang up, threw herself in his path, caught hold of him with incredible passion and was sufficiently deft to seize one end of the stolen article. They wrestled and struggled in good earnest, he laughing the while, and she working herself into a rage. They twisted and turned about, and

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

on Wilhelm hastening forward to appease and separate them, he saw Aurelia suddenly leap to one side holding a naked dagger in her hand, while Serlo, who had retained the scabbard, angrily threw it on the floor. Wilhelm stepped back amazed, and by his air of astonishment seemed to enquire the reason of so strange a dispute concerning such a singular piece of household stuff.

"You shall be judge between us," said Serlo. "What business has she with the bit of sharpened steel? Let her show it to you. This dagger is not fit for any actress. Keen and sharp in point and edge as knife or needle! To what end such buffoonery? Passionate as she is, she is sure to hurt herself some day. I have an intense hatred for all such singularities. A serious thought of this kind is madness, and so dangerous a toy is stupid."

"I have it again," cried Aurelia, holding up the naked blade. "I will take better care of my faithful friend. Forgive me!" she exclaimed, kissing the steel, "for having neglected thee!"

Serlo seemed to be seriously angry. "Take it as you like, brother," she continued; "I consider you unjust. How do you know that under this form there is not given me some precious talisman? or what help and counsel I find in it for evil days? Must then everything be injurious which looks dangerous?"

"Speeches like those, without any sense in them, are enough to turn me mad," said Serlo, and quitted the room in secret dudgeon. Aurelia returned the dagger to its sheath, which she picked up from the ground, and put it in her pocket. "Let us continue our conversation where my unhappy brother interrupted it," she replied, as Wilhelm asked a few questions about the recent strange combat.

"I suppose I must give way if you depict our good Ophelia thus, for it may have been the poet's intention; but I can more readily pity than sympathise with her. And permit me to say that, when we were interrupted, I was occupied with an observation for which you, dear friend, have in this short time given the occasion. With

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

astonishment I have noted the broad and correct glance with which you judge poetry, and especially dramatic poetry. The deepest recesses are not hidden from you, and the finest shades cannot escape you. Without having known the objects themselves in nature, you recognise them in their images. A sort of presentiment of the whole world seems to dwell in you, which is awakened and unfolded by the harmonious touch of poesy. For certainly," she continued, "nothing enters you from without! For I have seldom seen anybody who so entirely misunderstood the men among whom he lives as yourself. Allow me to say that when one hears you explain your Shakespeare one might think you came direct from the council-chamber of the gods, who were devising how to make men after their own image. But when you move about among men, I see in you the first-born, full-grown child of creation, gazing with wonder and amaze and edifying good-humour upon lions and apes, sheep and elephants, naïvely addressing them as your equals, because they happen to be there and can move about."

"I confess my state of schoolboy innocence," answered the other, "and beg for forgiveness. From my youth up I have always looked more within than without, and it is therefore quite natural that I should learn to know mankind up to a certain point without understanding men in the least."

"Certainly," said Aurelia, "I thought at first that you were making fun of us when you told us so many good things of the people you saw here. Your excellent Tarconi is nothing more than a pedant, and a charlatan to boot. The friendship between Philibert and Celio is simple nonsense; the latter, a moderate musician, makes the other believe whatever he likes, flatters him and anticipates all his fancies and desires, only that he may drag the young, lively, talented and everywhere welcome artist with him, and thus share all his advantages. What a miserable lot they are, this entire company which you have commended to my brother! I can sooner forgive

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

you for having been deceived in Horatio. This magnificent Apollo-figure, this dignity, this demeanour, seem to predict something, and no one would imagine that the whole is but a lifeless clod, had not happily the fiddle-bow been invented to extract a few notes from him."

Wilhelm stood before her overwhelmed with shame. Never had anybody made him so known to himself. He answered nothing, but let his thoughts wander backwards, pondered over himself, and it seemed as though a mist had fallen from his eyes.

"You must not be vexed at what I have said," exclaimed Aurelia. "This is a lovely characteristic of the youthful poet and artist, for you are both, although you do not publish yourself as such. This mysticism and innocence are like the sheath which enfolds and nourishes a bud ; and it is a grave misfortune when we are too early driven out of it. Truly it is good for us not always to know those for whom we labour.

"It was so with me too, when I appeared on the stage cherishing the highest possible opinion of my own nation. What were not the Germans ! What might they not become ! I addressed this nation, above which a low platform elevated me, and from which I was separated by a row of lamps, whose smoke and lustre prevented me from clearly distinguishing the objects before me. How welcome was the sound of applause which arose to greet me, how precious a possession this gift, so unanimously offered me by so many hands ! Long did I soothe myself with its incense. As I affected them, so the crowd reacted upon me ; I and my public were on the best of terms with each other ; and behind my public I always saw the nation, with all that was noble and good ! Unhappily it was not merely the actress who interested a great part of the theatre-goers ; they made further claims upon the young and sprightly girl. Many wished me to share with them the sentiments which I had excited within their own bosoms, and that unfortunately was not my affair. I wished to elevate their minds, but laid no claim whatever to what they called their hearts, so that first one and then

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

another became a burden to me. Men of all ranks, ages and characters, each made the attempt after his own fashion, and in my own fashion I dismissed them all. Nothing annoyed me so much as that I could not shut myself up in my room like any other honest girl, and thus save myself all manner of trouble. The men all began now to reveal themselves from the side which I had been accustomed to see in my aunt's house. And here I should once more have found them detestable, had not their peculiarities and follies amused me. As I could not escape from seeing them at the theatre and in our house, I determined to observe them all. In this my old and valued friend, who knew the world intimately, rendered me yeoman service. And if you remember that from the pert shopman and the conceited merchant's son to the shrewd and cautious man of the world, the gallant soldier and the boldly encroaching prince, all passed one after the other before me, some trying to secure their romance openly, and others by backstairs influence, you will readily acknowledge that I can claim to have pretty well run through my nation.

“The fantastically garbed student, the modestly awkward scholar, the doddering, self-complaisant canon, the stiff and punctilious business man, the ignorant baron, the amiably sleek and smooth courtier, the youthful cleric, who has forgotten his vows, the placid rich man and the smart, speculative and eager merchant, all these I have had the pleasure of watching as they manœuvred before me, and, by heaven! there were few among them who were able to inspire even the smallest interest. On the contrary, I found it extremely painful to gather up in detail, and with the utmost difficulty and wearisomeness, the applause of fools, which, when offered in the whole, had given me such satisfaction, and which in the mass I would so gladly have acquired. I began, therefore, to despise them all from the bottom of my heart, and felt as if the entire nation had of set purpose wished to prostitute itself before me by its special ambassadors. Altogether they seemed so clumsy, so ill-bred, so badly educated, so void of agreeable

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

manners, so tasteless, that in those days I often exclaimed that no German could even buckle a shoe unless he were taught by some foreigner.

"You see, then, how blindly hypochondriac I was, and the longer this lasted, the worse grew my complaint. I might even have hanged myself; but went to the other extreme. I got married, or rather allowed myself to be married. My brother, who had undertaken the management of the theatre, wanted very much to have a collaborator, and my old friend wished greatly to see me provided for before his end. Their choice fell upon a young man to whom I was not averse, but who lacked everything my brother possessed: genius, life, wit and swift intuition; yet was gifted with all that the other lacked: love of order, diligence and an inestimable talent for house-keeping and the management of money.

"He became my husband, without my exactly knowing how; we lived together, though I hardly know why. Enough, the business prospered, our takings were large; we made ends meet, and that was my husband's merit. I thought no more either of world or nation. I had nothing I could share with the world, and, as for the nation, I despised it, or rather, never gave it a thought. When I acted, I did it for a living, and when I opened my mouth, it was because I might not be silent, because I had appeared on purpose to speak.

"Yet don't let me paint too black a picture! In truth I had yielded entirely to my brother's plans; he was anxious for applause and money (for, between ourselves, he likes to hear himself praised and spends freely). I no longer played according to my feelings or conviction, but as he instructed me, and when I had done as he desired, he was content. Money flowed in, he could live as he liked, and we got on with him splendidly.

"Meanwhile I had fallen into the jog-trot manner of a day-labourer, my days were passed without joy and without interest. My marriage remained childless, and did not last long. My husband was sickly, and as, apart from my care for him, I lived in a state of general indifference, I

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

happened to make an acquaintance which opened out a new life for me, a newer and more rapid, for it will quickly lay me on one side."

For a time she remained silent, and then continued : " Suddenly my talkative humour fails me, and I scarcely trust myself to open my mouth further ! Let me rest for a while, and if we continue alone, do not go away until you know more exactly that which has already been told you. In the meantime call Mignon in and hear what he (*sic*) wants."

During Aurelia's narrative the child had several times come into the room, but noticing that they spoke more softly when she was there, had gone away and now sat quietly waiting in the dining-room.

When they called her back she brought with her a book, which by its form and binding they recognised as a small geographical atlas. During their stay at the pastor's house she had seen her first maps with great wonderment, and by a hundred questions got him to instruct her as far as possible. This fresh knowledge seemed immensely to have stimulated her desire to learn. She earnestly begged Wilhelm to buy her the book, for which she had pledged her silver buckles with the picture-dealer, and wished to redeem them to-morrow morning, it being now too late. This he agreed to do, and she opened the book with great delight and began partly to repeat what she knew, and partly, as was her manner, to ask the strangest questions. Even here they could perceive that, in spite of her utmost exertions, she found all learning very difficult. The same was also noticeable with her handwriting, with which she had taken such great pains. She still spoke very broken German, and it was only when she opened her mouth to sing, or touched her zither, that she seemed able to use the only organ by which she could unlock and communicate her inmost being. As we are speaking of her, we must remember one great perplexity in which she had recently placed our friend. Every time she came or went, each day as she wished him good morning or good evening, she clasped him so tightly in her arms and kissed him with

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

such ardour, that he often grew anxious and fearful for the violence of her unfolding nature. The spasmodic vivacity of her demeanour increased, and her whole being seemed to move in a restless silence. Frequently when she appeared to be standing calmly by, it was noticed that she struck her teeth together, or softly ground them. She must always have something in her hands, a handkerchief, which she knotted, a piece of thread, which she twisted, and this never with any appearance of playing, but as though some inward violent convulsion were thereby diverted.

As on this occasion there seemed to be no end to her questions, Aurelia became impatient, being in such a frame of mind as to wish further conversation with our friend on a subject lying very near her heart. This she gave the little one pretty clearly to understand, and at last they sent her away as the only means of being alone.

"Now or never," said Aurelia, "I must narrate to you the rest of my story. If my tenderly beloved, but unjust, friend were but a few miles from here, I would say to you : Mount your horse at once, and by some means or other make his acquaintance, and when you return, you would have forgiven and pitied me. It was just at the critical time when I was anxious about my husband's life that I first met him. He had recently returned from travelling, and his companion had left him.

"He approached me with quiet dignity, with frank kindliness, spoke of myself, my position, my playing, so that our first interview riveted my attention on him. His judgements were sound, without being dogmatic, correct without unkindness ; and if sometimes he were harsh, it became him well, and his sarcasm was at the same time pleasant. He seemed accustomed to good fortune among women, which put me on my guard ; he was not at all insinuating or importunate, which made me careless.

"He associated with few, spent most of his time on horseback visiting his many acquaintances in the neighbourhood. When he returned he alighted here, treating my sick husband with tender care, and procuring some

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

relief for the suffering man by a skilful physician ; and as he interested himself in all that concerned me, so also he let me share in all his own interests. He told me that as a second son he had been dedicated to a soldier's life, for which he had an intense love, but that later, owing to the death of his elder brother, he had been compelled to comply with the plans and wishes of his family. He had had to travel and occupy himself with matters which interested him but little. In fact, he hid nothing from me, but unfolded his inmost soul, his history, his capacities, his passions ; everything drew me along, everything, everything carried me out of myself.

“ In the midst of these sensations I lost my husband, and this pretty much as I had taken him, and now, after his death, the entire care fell upon me. For my brother only wanted to act and live, while caring for nothing. I was exceedingly busy, studied my parts more diligently than ever, and played once more as aforetime, yea, with increased power and life. But I did not always play best when I knew that my noble friend was in the theatre. Sometimes he heard me secretly, and you may imagine how deliciously his unexpected praise fell upon my ears. Truly I am a singular being ! When I acted a part, it seemed always as though I were praising him, for such was the mood of my heart, whatever else the words might say. But if I knew that he was among the audience, I was ashamed to speak and act with my full force, as though unable to utter the praise to his face ; but when he was away, I had free play, and certainly did not spare myself. Moreover, as by some wonder, my relation to the public and the whole nation underwent a change. Once more they appeared to me in the most advantageous light. I cannot tell you how amazed I felt, and still find it incomprehensible how such changes can take place in our imaginative methods.

“ How unintelligent,” I often said to myself, “ you were, when formerly the nation displeased you just because it is a nation. A multitude of men, among whom many talents and powers are allotted, without their

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

possessing any general final purpose, or being individually interesting, yet, for that very reason, when taken together, may form an element upon which a capable person can act. I rejoiced that they had been born, that they might be led, and for this I loved them, because I believed I had found them a leader.

“Lothair had always depicted the Germans from the side of their bravery, and assured me that there is no braver nation on the face of the earth, if only they be well led. The thought struck me, and I felt ashamed that I had never noticed this prime attribute. I soon began now to better my manner of thought; I enquired no longer after culture, breed or condition, and grew satisfied with the rough and uncouth husk of an excellent kernel. Henceforth I spoke as one inspired, middling verses turned to gold in my mouth, and if a poet had been by my side, I could have wrought wonders of effect. And thus your young widow lived for months. He could not exist without me, and I was quite miserable when he failed to appear. He showed me letters from his relatives, and from his admirable sister, was informed of every smallest detail of my own situation, so that no more perfect and intimate unity of spirit could be imagined, yet the word ‘love’ was never mentioned between us.

“He went and came, came and went—and now, my friend, it is high time that you also should go.”

CHAPTER XII

OUR friend stood now as an intimate between brother and sister, each of whom was equally dear to him, for each laid hold of, nourished and interested a separate half of his being. Aurelia's fate deeply moved him, but without exciting him to any tenderness; her impassioned intellect called back his kindly disposition from its youthful ecstasy, bearing him away from the world of idealism into that of reality. He was amazed to be at once made

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

conscious of himself, and then, by comparison of himself with others, relegated to his own place.

Moreover, he could have had no more desirable mentor and leader in his favourite art than Serlo, who not only appeared to most advantage in the theatre, as in his proper element, but had also studied the art which from earliest youth he had practised. In the truest sense of the words he had been born upon the boards, had crept, when a child, as Harlequin out of an egg, had floated from the clouds, or enraptured the public as a most delightfully diminutive sweep, bearing a little white ladder. While still a boy he exercised his talent for mimicry upon the monotony of the other actors, and could imitate each one so accurately in voice, manner and gesture that, while conscious they were being made fun of, they could not help laughing. A retentive memory helped him greatly; he knew whole plays by heart, and his happy temper enabled him always to seize the right expression, save and except the pathetic and the tender. Apprehension and dread of the consequences of certain wild pranks drove him, when scarcely fourteen years of age, to run away from his own people. But he had no fear of being able to make his way in the world, and even ventured to produce before high and low, before the people and before critics, a hitherto unheard-of spectacle, in which he presumed, alone and unaided, to act entire tragedies and comedies. In every room, in every garden, he would set up his theatre on the spur of the moment, where, without further illusion, and solely by the excellence of his declamation, he entertained and delighted his audiences. All conventional characters he imitated admirably, reproducing the voices of women and children so as to deceive every ear, and no man ever gave a better caricature of a Jewish Rabbi. He had so perfectly seized the desperate zeal, the sensuous and nauseous enthusiasm, the crazy gestures, the indistinct mumbling and sharp-toned cries, the effeminate movements and spasmodic exertions, the entire perversity of an antiquated nonsense, and understood how to focus them all so admirably, that the very

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

absurdity of the thing never failed to procure a pleasant quarter of an hour even for the most fastidious. He was so obliging as to entertain our friend by degrees with all these tricks of his art, who enjoyed them immensely; for although they lay entirely outside his own style, yet they were the first things he had ever seen given with true dramatic spirit and expression, or from which he could extract both instruction and example for himself.

All this would have been most excellent and good, had not Melina and his people sometimes appeared in the background as evil spirits. These unfortunates, who now began to lack for everything, trusted for a long time in Philina's words, and indeed had not quite ceased to hope for bread through her means, at last commenced to urge Wilhelm more sharply to contribute his share to that end. Meanwhile he, too, had tried to persuade Serlo on their behalf, but he was one who could not be persuaded to anything which was not to his own interest. On the contrary, he sought to make clear to our friend how nice it would be if he would only appear upon the stage himself. Especially urgent did he become after Philina had privately revealed the fact of Wilhelm's previous appearance upon the stage, recognising therefrom the greater probability of being able eventually to utilise his passion for the theatre and thus bind him to his own enterprise.

After having once spent a whole afternoon in this manner with Serlo, Wilhelm hurried off to Aurelia, whom he found reclining on her couch.

She seemed perfectly quiescent. "Do you think you will be able to play to-morrow?" he asked.

"O yes," she answered quickly. "You know nothing ever prevents my doing that. If I only knew of some method of checking the noisy applause of our pit; they mean well, yet will assuredly be my death. I thought the day before yesterday that my heart would surely give way. Formerly I could well endure it, if, having thoroughly studied my part and rightly prepared myself, the welcome sign from every quarter proved, when all was over, that it was well done. But now! I speak not what

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

I will, nor as I would, but am borne along and grow confused ; yet the effect is far greater, and the applause more vociferous, while I think to myself : ‘ If you only knew what it is that delights you ! that it is to the deepest anguish of my soul you are giving your approbation ! ’

“ This morning early I was learning my rôle, and have just now been repeating and trying it over, and feel worn out and broken ; to-morrow the same weary round once more, and then to-morrow evening I must act—and thus I drag myself along, get up and go to bed. The whole has become an eternal circle ; then all sorts of pitiful consolations present themselves before me, which I fling aside and curse. I am determined not to succumb ; but why should there be any necessity for this, which is bringing me to ruin ? Possibly it might be otherwise ! I must pay the price for being a German. It is characteristic of the Germans to take everything seriously, and then everything weighs heavily upon them.”

“ Yes, my friend, if you did not take it so hardly ! ”

“ It is hard enough ! ” she interrupted him.

“ Have you then nothing left ? ” he replied, “ your better days, your health, your art ? If without your fault you have lost one part of your estate, must you then throw the rest after it ? Is there any need to do so ? ”

She was silent for a few moments and then broke out afresh : “ I know, yes, I know very well that love is only waste of time ! What might I not have done ! what ought I not to have done ! It has all turned to nothing, to pure nothingness, and I—a poor, poor, love-sick creature, merely love-sick ! But have compassion upon me, for, by God, I am a wretched being.” Then, after a further pause she exclaimed : “ You are accustomed to have everything fly into your arms ; no, you cannot feel it, there is no man who can feel the worth of a woman who knows how to honour herself. By all the holy angels, by all the images of blessedness which a pure and gentle spirit can imagine, there is nothing sweeter than the soul of a woman who surrenders herself. So long as we deserve to be called

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

women we are cold, haughty, high-minded, transparent and prudent, and all that ! I will despair, will despair of set purpose ! No drop of blood shall remain in me that is not punished, no fibre which I will not torment. You may smile, yes, you may laugh at such theatrical outbursts of passion ! ”

Wilhelm felt far removed from any impulse to laughter ; he was himself too deeply afflicted by the dreadful condition, half natural and half forced, of his friend, he partook the torment of her unhappy exaltation, his brain was distracted, and his blood feverishly agitated.

She had risen from her couch and now paced the room. “ I repeat every reason to myself,” she exclaimed, “ why I should not love, and I know that he is not worthy of it. I turn away my thoughts this way and that, I busy myself. Sometimes I take up a rôle, though I may not have to play it ; the old ones, which I know through and through, I practise diligently and ever more diligently in every smallest detail ; I practise and practise. O my friend, my confidant, how dreadful the task thus with violence to tear myself from myself !

“ My reason suffers, my brain is ever on the rack, and to save myself from madness I yield once more to my feelings, to the thought that I love him—yes, I love him ! I love him ! ” she exclaimed with a flood of tears, “ I love him ! and thus will I die ! ”

He seized her by the hand and earnestly besought her not to wear herself out. “ Oh,” said he, “ how strange it is that not only so much that is impossible, but also so much that is possible should be denied to man ! You were not destined to find a faithful heart such as would have made your bliss. I, though, was destined to stake the whole welfare of my life upon an unhappy being, whom by the very weight of my constancy I dragged to the ground like a reed, and perhaps have broken.” He had already confided the story of Mariana to Aurelia, and could therefore now refer to it.

She gazed blankly into his eyes and said : “ Can you declare that you have never deceived a woman, never

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

sought by careless protestations and fickle gallantry or heart-moving oaths to incline her to your desires ? ”

“ I can,” answered Wilhelm, “ and without any boasting. I lived a very simple life, and seldom came into any temptation to make the attempt. And what a warning, O my fair and noble friend, do I not behold in your own wretched state ! Let me swear to you an oath, an oath entirely conformable to the nature of my heart, whose solemnity is consecrated by the emotion you see excited within me ! I will resist every fleeting fancy, and even the more serious shall remain buried in my bosom. No mortal woman shall ever hear any declaration of love from my lips, unless I can also dedicate to her my whole life ! ”

She gazed at him with an air of wild indifference, and as he offered his hand in pledge of his oath, retired several steps.

“ What difference will it make ! ” said she ; “ so many women’s tears more or less will not swell the ocean. And yet,” she continued, turning round, “ one among a thousand ! that is still something ; one honourable man among a thousand, that, too, is something ! But do you know what you are promising ? ”

“ Yes, I know,” answered Wilhelm, reaching her his hand.

“ Then I accept it,” replied she. Wilhelm still held his hand out towards her ; she made a movement with the right hand, and he thought she was about to grasp his own. Instead of that she rapidly thrust her hand into her pocket and, quick as lightning, plucked out the dagger and drew both point and edge lightly and swiftly across his hand. He promptly snatched it back, but already the blood ran freely down.

“ We must mark you men distinctly, if you are to take heed,” she cried with a certain air of contentment, which, however, immediately changed into assiduous haste. She took her handkerchief and therewith bound his hand, to check the first gush of blood. “ Forgive,” she exclaimed, “ a half-insane woman, and do not mourn over these few drops of blood, for they have brought me back to myself,

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

and I will ask forgiveness on my knees. Now I must heal you, that is my affair."

Hastening to her cupboard, she brought linen, plaster and instruments, staunched the blood and carefully dressed the wound. The cut penetrated the ball of the hand just under the thumb, dividing the line of life, and extending to the little finger. She bound it up in silence, seeming lost in a kind of significant meditation. More than once he enquired: "My dearest, how could you injure your friend?"

"Silence!" responded she, laying her finger on her mouth. "Silence!"

CHAPTER XIII

SERLO, to whom nothing would have been more welcome than to see Wilhelm a member of his company, had managed to extract from him the names of the business friends in the town with whom his father was connected. Having obtained these, he was soon able to find out what news had come to hand here and there from the firm of Meister. He was informed that letters had been lying there for some time announcing the death of the elder Meister, and the widow, it was said, would hardly await the expiry of the year of mourning before marrying an old and much-loved friend. The son-in-law Werner had entirely taken over the business, and the eldest son had disappeared during a journey. As from youth up he had always shown something strange in his behaviour, and evinced but little taste for business, it was thought that, on the outbreak of war, he had turned soldier, hoping in this way to make his fortune.

Serlo, believing this news very favourable for his project, hastened therewith to Aurelia, and gave her not indistinctly to understand that he had also conceived this plan with and for her account.

"My dear brother," said she with a profound sigh, "I

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

wish all good luck to your enterprise, and am convinced that you would make an excellent acquisition in this young man. But as for me, I do not wish anyone to take account of me ; I can no longer be counted among the number of those who hope, and whoever reckons on me will probably find himself much deceived."

"Hope," replied Serlo, "is the fairest heritage of the living, of which, even though they wish it, they cannot dispossess themselves, and if ever you are to be healed, my dear, no one is able to work the cure except this young man."

"Brother," answered Aurelia, "you have an evil propensity for saying things which were better unsaid, and left for time to reveal."

He smiled and asked whether she would convey the news to Wilhelm or leave him to do it ? She begged him to do it himself.

Several days elapsed before Serlo found opportunity for telling our friend concerning the fortunes of his family, while no day passed on which the latter did not draw nearer to Aurelia.

The necessity for going to her to have his wound bound up, her care for him, her sadness and kind-heartedness won for her the friendliest sentiments of his heart, and she found great relief in intercourse with him.

She had made quite an elegant covering of black velvet for his hand. "I hope," said she seriously, "that you will soon be healed, yet I fancy you will bear the mark of this wound all your life long. You are honest, friend, yet what man is there who does not need a steadfast reminder ! Should your good spirit ever forsake you, and you stretch out your hand to tempt, contrary to your oath, a woman whom your heart has not already consecrated, then glance down upon this scar while there is yet time."

Serlo seized the first opportunity of conveying to our friend without much circumlocution his news concerning the condition of his family, and we can well imagine how sorely Wilhelm was shocked by the intelligence. Without allowing him time to recover, Serlo earnestly broached his

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

proposal. "You may do it now without any hesitation," added he; "because your family has already surmounted the anxiety of believing you engaged in the perils of war, and it will therefore bring them a double and triple consolation to learn that you are engaged in an agreeable and suitable occupation."

Wilhelm had not much to say in reply, except that to him this step appeared insurmountable. His heart inclined that way, and yet a something, for which there is no name, opposed his desire.

Serlo urged him in every possible way, offered considerable advantages, and finally even a share in the profits; and when nothing else seemed to avail, advanced his strongest argument, which he had reserved to the last.

"You can have no better proof of my earnest desire to win you for the theatre than that I should now offer to take your entire company with you, and in this way relieve you of an oppressive promise."

"And how," said Wilhelm half impatiently, "can the men whom you have hitherto so heartily despised be thereby made any better?"

"Better they will not become," answered Serlo. "but this is the only way in which they can be made serviceable to me. I will lay my plan before you, and you will perceive that it cannot be executed without your aid. You know that the actor who plays the first-lover parts for me, although possessed of a good figure and pleasant voice, is yet far from the perfection desirable for such a position. He lacks a certain fire and emphasis, which cannot be supplied by a languishing and agreeable exterior. But apart from that, I have not only reason to be dissatisfied with him, but must also humour his wife and all his adherents. If I can dispense with him, I may as well let the rest go with him, and can therefore employ or incorporate, more or less, your whole troupe.

"My first lover's wife plays the rôles of mothers, queens and such like; Madame Melina would fill these parts no worse, and perhaps better. His brother might be replaced by the so-called Laertes, who at least gives hope of

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

becoming something better. At the same time a woman is leaving us, whose place our Philina could very well fill ; and there are several others whom in any case I am sending away, and with whose rôles it is a matter of indifference whether they be a trifle better or worse acted ; the pedant and all the rest shall each receive a post. Melina shall have charge of the wardrobe, to keep out the moths.

“ You see that I am not contradicting myself in now offering to take on those against whom I formerly raised such serious objections. But blot yourself out of my plan, and you will find that not even its smallest detail can be executed. Think my proposition over carefully, and consider what substantial advantages you will secure by such a decision both for yourself, for us, for your forsaken company and for the public.”

“ Just another word,” said Serlo, holding the door ; “ if you do not decide now, you will probably do so within a fortnight. I have well-founded hope that a woman will tread my stage who has not yet appeared upon any, but, like yourself, has enthusiastically practised our art in secret. A figure beautiful and stately beyond words, a magnificent organ of speech, pure and distinct enunciation and a deportment ! in a word, everything one could wish. I don't say this that you may fall in love with her ; but only to convince you that we are not unworthy of you, and, be assured, things will go far better when once we can count you one of ourselves.”

CHAPTER XIV

It is characteristic of the human soul that it uplifts itself most quickly when it has been most deeply depressed.

To the other burdens already weighing upon our friend, and which had gradually robbed him of his old alertness, was now added the death of his father, coupled with the fate of his remaining relatives, which now lay so heavy on his spirits that he felt he must find some way of escape.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

Regret and grief for the loss of the good old man, whose existence had from his earliest years been interwoven with his own, a half alien sentiment against his mother, feeble interest in the commercial undertakings of his brother-in-law, coupled with his own faults and strange story, all these oscillated to and fro in his mind, and more than once seemed inextricably mingled within him. At last he felt once more the full strength of his youth, shook himself together and stepped with free and courageous glance before the present, behind and beyond which gladsome images of the future crowded to meet his gaze.

"Here I stand now," said he to himself, "not at the parting of the ways, but at my goal, and yet I fear to take the last step, am afraid to grasp the prize !

"Yea, if ever a calling, a *mission*, was plain and distinct, surely it is this one ! Everything happened to me by chance, without any contributory action on my part, and yet everything is just as I had thought it out, as I had previously designed it. Most marvellous ! With nothing does man seem to be more intimate than with his own hopes and musings, long nourished and cherished in his deepest heart, and yet when at last they greet him, when they thrust themselves upon him, he knows them not, and shrinks back at the sight. All the fair dreams to which I yielded before that unhappy night which tore me from Mariana now stand before me and offer themselves to my grasp. Hither I wished to take my flight, and hither I have been gently conducted. I desired to find an engagement with Serlo, and now he himself seeks me out and offers me conditions such as a beginner could never have expected. Was it then only love for Mariana which fettered me to the theatre ? Or was it love for art which bound me more closely to her ? Was that prospect, that outlet to the theatre, merely welcome to a disorderly and restless youth, who wished to continue a life which the conditions of burgher existence did not allow ? Or was it something else, something purer and more worthy ? And if these were at that time your sentiments, what reason have you had to change them since ? And is not such a

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

step more allowable now that I have no secondary motives which anybody could consider equivocal ? ”

He once more ran over in his mind all the circumstances which had invited, excited or impelled him, until at last he found that he was driven to this step. The fact that he could still retain Mignon with him, and need not send the harper away, formed important grounds for his determination.

And yet, as often happens in such cases, when the whole weight of conviction lies in one scale, suddenly the entire counter-weight flings itself into the other and hinders the decision. Nevertheless this turned out excellently well for the business in hand. “The first time,” said he to himself, “that I entered a theatre I was amazed and carried out of myself, though it was but a flying visit. But now that it is to be for life, I shall have time and leisure to examine and consider everything.”

While still swaying to and fro in these and similar meditations, the door opened, and Aurelia, Philina and Serlo unexpectedly entered. The idea had been Philina's, willingly acquiesced in by Serlo, and by which Aurelia had submitted to be borne along, though seeing clearly enough through its author and hating her in her heart. They greeted him with much friendliness, and Philina remarked jestingly : “We have come to obtain an affirmative answer.”

Wilhelm wanted to offer some reply. “We want your ‘Yes,’ or not a single word ! You may keep silence, if you like, but if you open your mouth, it must only be to make us all happy.”

“I have no right,” said Aurelia, “to beg so important a favour from you, but if I had, I would make use of it in order to add weight to the manifold reasons which must influence your decision. Therefore, Yes, if it be possible.”

“Yes, yes !” said Serlo. “’Tis but a little word ! Indecision is good for nothing ; ’tis the very worst waste of time ! When once a man has grasped his purpose the rest follows of itself.”

“Just a little ‘Yes,’ ” said Philina ingratiatingly.

WILHELM MEISTER'S THEATRICAL MISSION

“ Well then—yes ! ” replied Wilhelm.

Aurelia seized his still bandaged right hand with a demurely sincere delight ; Philina grasped the left and, bending down rapidly, lifted it to her lips and impressed a smacking kiss upon it, which he was unable to avoid ; while Serlo gladly and heartily embraced him. He could give nothing in return, for he stood as one struck dumb and, in spite of their presence, fell into a state of silent musing. His thoughts roamed hither and thither, till suddenly the wood-encompassed meadow filled his imagination, and from the bushes, mounted on a white horse, the lovely amazon rode to greet him, approached, dismounted, moved to and fro with humane solicitude, stood still—the mantle fell from her shoulders and covered the wounded man, her face, her form gleamed once more resplendently before him and—vanished !

END

Apprenticeship

Book One

Chapter One

The play lasted for a very long time. Old Barbara went to the window several times to see if the coaches had already started leaving the theater. She was waiting for Mariane, her pretty mistress who was that night delighting the audience as a young officer in the epilogue—waiting for her with more impatience than usual, when she merely had a simple supper ready. For this time a surprise package had come in the mail from a wealthy young merchant named Norberg, to show that even when he was away, he was still thinking of his beloved. A trusty servant, companion, adviser, go-between and house-keeper, Barbara had every right to open the package. And this evening she could not resist, for the favors of this generous lover meant even more to her than they did to Mariane. To her great delight she found in the package not only fine muslin and elegant ribbons for Mariane, but for herself a length of cotton material, scarves and a roll of coins. She thought of the absent Norberg with great affection and gratitude, and eagerly resolved to praise him to Mariane, to remind her of what she owed him, and of his hopes and expectations that she would be faithful to him.

The muslin, brightened by the color of the half-unrolled ribbons, lay like a Christmas present on the table, and the light of the candles added a special luster to the gift. Everything was in place as she heard Mariane's footsteps on the stairs and she hastened to meet her. But how surprised she was when this female officer disregarded her affectionate greeting, and, pushing past her, rushed into the room, dropped the sword and plumed hat with unusual haste, walked restlessly up and down and never noticed the festive candles.

"What is it, my dear?" asked the old woman, puzzled. "For heaven's sake, girl, what's wrong? Look at these presents. Who could they be from but your loving friend? Norberg has sent you a length of muslin for a nightgown. He'll soon be here, and seems more eager and generous than usual."

Barbara was about to show Mariane the gifts that she too had received from him when Mariane, turning away from the gifts, cried out: "No! No! I don't want to hear any more about all this. I did what you wanted, so be it! When

Norberg comes back, I'll be his again, I'll be yours — do with me what you will. But until then, I want to be myself. If you had a thousand tongues, you couldn't change my mind. I am going to give all of myself to the one who loves me and whom I love. Don't make such faces! I am going to love him with everything I have as if it could last forever."

The old woman had counterarguments enough. But when the exchange began to get violent and bitter, Mariane jumped up and grabbed her. The old woman only laughed uproariously and said, "If I am to be sure of my life, I have to see to it that you are soon in a long dress again. Go and change! I hope that you will apologize, as a girl, for the harm you did me as a flighty officer: off with that coat and with everything underneath it. It's an uncomfortable costume, and dangerous for you, I see. The epaulettes have gone to your head."

Barbara tried to hold her but Mariane broke free. "Not so fast!" she said, "I'm expecting a visitor tonight."

"That's not good," the old woman replied. "Surely not that young, lovesick, unfledged merchant's son?" "Exactly! Him!" said Mariane.

"Magnanimity seems now to be your ruling passion," the old woman scornfully replied. "You exert yourself for those who are either immature or poor. It must be nice to be adored as an unselfish benefactress."

"Make fun of me if you like! I love him! I love him! Oh, how happy I am to say this, for the first time in my life. This is the passion I have acted on the stage and yet never really known. I will throw myself at him, embrace him as if I would hold him forever. I shall show him all my love and enjoy all of his!"

"Calm down! Calm down," said the old woman quietly. "I must interrupt your joy with the news that Norberg will be here in two weeks. Here is his letter, which came with the presents."

"The dawn may take my lover away, but I won't think about that now. Fourteen days! That's an eternity! Just think what can happen, what can change, in two weeks."

Wilhelm entered the room. How eagerly she rushed towards him! And how passionately he embraced that red uniform and the white satin vest. Who would dare to describe, who has the right to describe, the bliss of two lovers. The old womanservant went off muttering, and we, too, leave the happy couple to themselves.

Chapter Two

When Wilhelm greeted his mother the next morning, she told him that his father was very angry and would soon forbid those regular visits to the theater. "I, too, like to go to the theater sometimes," she continued, "but I am often annoyed at the way our domestic peace and quiet are disturbed by your wild addiction to this pleasure. Your father is always saying, 'What's the use of this? Why waste one's time in the theater?'"

"I've often heard him say that," said Wilhelm, "and I may have answered him too rudely; but for goodness' sake, Mother, why is everything useless that doesn't bring in money or enlarge our property? Didn't we have enough room in the old house? Was it necessary to build a new one? Doesn't my father spend a sizable amount of his profits every year in decorating these rooms? All these silk wallpapers and this English furniture, do we need all that? Couldn't we do with less? These striped walls, with their endless rows of flowers, their scrolls and baskets and figures, seem so unpleasant, like a stage curtain in our own house. It's different in a real theater where you know that the curtain will go up and reveal all sorts of things to entertain, enlighten and elevate us."

"Don't overdo it!" said his mother. "Your father likes to have his own fun of an evening. Moreover, he believes that it only distracts you, and in the end I'll be blamed when he gets cross. How often have I been reproached for giving you that wretched puppet theater for Christmas twelve years ago. It gave you that taste for the theater!"

"Don't blame the puppet theater, don't regret that token of your love and care for me. Those were my first happy moments in the new and empty house. I can still remember it, that moment of wonder: after we had received our usual presents, we were told to sit down in front of a door to an adjacent room, which then opened, not just to let us in or out, but for some unexpected festive event, with a great gate closed by a mystic curtain. We watched this from a distance and then, as we were dying to know what was twinkling and rattling behind the half-transparent curtain, we were told to draw up our chairs and to wait.

"So, we all sat quietly until a whistle blew, the curtain rolled up and revealed, in bright red, a view into a temple. Samuel, the High Priest, appeared with Jonathan, and their curious exchange of voices sounded very dignified. Then Saul came on the scene, annoyed by the pompous and heavily armored warrior who had challenged him and his followers to battle. I was glad when the dwarf-like son of Jesse leaped forward with his shepherd's crook, bag and slingshot and said, 'Almighty King and Master! Let no man's heart fail because of him. If Your Majesty will permit me, I will go and fight this mighty giant.' That was the end of the first act, and the audience was eager to see what would happen next. Everyone wished the music would stop. Then the curtain rose again. David was consecrating the giant's flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. The Philistine vented his scorn, stamped both feet, then fell down like a log and put the matter to a glorious end. And then the maidens sang: 'Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands!' The head of the giant was carried in before the tiny victor and he won the hand of the king's daughter. But I, for all my delight, was annoyed by the fact that this lucky prince was fashioned like a dwarf, for 'little David' and 'big Goliath' had really been presented true to life. But Mother, where are those puppets now? I promised to show them to a friend who was amused by what I told him recently of these childhood games."

"I am not surprised that you remember these things so vividly, you were so interested in them from the beginning! I remember how you sneaked the text away from me and then learned the whole play by heart. I noticed that one evening, when you made a David and Goliath out of wax, let them talk to each other, gave the giant a whack, stuck his shapeless head onto a big pin and put it in little David's hand. Your mother was so delighted at your good memory and the fine speeches, that she decided to give you the whole company of wooden puppets on the spot. Little did I know what trouble that would give me."

"Don't grieve over that," Wilhelm replied. "Those playthings have given us both so many pleasant hours." He then asked for the keys for the room where the puppets were kept, rushed off, found the puppets and for a moment was transported back to the time when he thought they were real, live creatures, when he thought he could bring them alive by his own lively voice and the movements of his own hands. He took them up to his room and guarded them carefully.

Chapter Three

If, as is often said, first love is the best that any heart can experience early or late, our hero must be considered thrice blest for being able to enjoy these supreme moments in full measure. Few of us are so favored, for in our early years our feelings often take us through a hard school and, after a few paltry indulgences, we must forgo our highest wishes and learn forever to do without what we once dreamed of as utter bliss.

It was on the wings of imagination that Wilhelm's desire for this charming girl soared. He won her affection after a short acquaintance and soon found himself in possession of someone he both loved and worshipped. She had first appeared in the flattering light of a theatrical performance, and his own passion for the stage was closely connected with his first love for a woman. Being young, he could fully enjoy the offered pleasures which were sustained and intensified by the poetry of her world. And her own ambiguous situation, her fear that he might discover all too soon what her position was—this gave her a pleasing semblance of modesty and anxiety, which only enhanced his fondness for her. As she loved him so dearly, her uneasiness only increased her tenderness. In his arms she was the most adorable creature.

When he awoke from the first frenzy of joy, and thought about his life and his circumstances, everything seemed different—his duties more compelling, his pastimes more absorbing, his knowledge clearer, his talents much stronger, his purposes more definite. It was therefore easy for him to avoid his father's reproaches, to pacify his mother, and to enjoy Mariane's love undisturbed. He performed his daily tasks promptly, stopped going to the theater regularly and made sure to be pleasant at supper; but when everyone had gone to bed, he

put on his cloak, crept quietly into the garden and hurried straight to his beloved, his heart beating fast like that of a young lover in a play.

"What did you bring?" asked Mariane one evening when he arrived with a parcel, which Barbara, hoping for a nice present, scrutinized closely. "You'll never guess," said Wilhelm.

Mariane was amazed (and Barbara dismayed) when what he unwrapped turned out to be a jumbled pile of miniature puppets. Mariane laughed as he untangled the wires and proudly displayed each figure. Barbara slunk off, displeased.

Not much is needed to amuse two lovers; they had a wonderful evening. The little band of puppets was paraded, every figure carefully examined and laughed over. Mariane did not like King Saul in his black velvet gown and gold crown: she thought him much too stiff and pedantic. She preferred Jonathan's smooth chin, his yellow and red costume and his turban; she moved him nicely by the wires and made him bow and declare his love. But she wouldn't pay any attention to the prophet Samuel, although Wilhelm proudly pointed to his breastplate and told her that the taffeta of his gown was from one of his grandmother's old dresses. David was too small for her, and Goliath too big. It was Jonathan she loved. Him she treated with particular delicacy, and in the end transferred her cherishing embraces from the puppet to Wilhelm. And so, once again, a little game became the preliminary for hours of bliss.

They were interrupted in their sweet dreams of love by a noise in the street. Mariane called to the old woman, who was busy as usual altering Mariane's costumes for the next play. Barbara reported that some merrymakers were just leaving the tavern nearby where they had been treating themselves to fresh oysters (which had just come in) and champagne.

"A pity we didn't think of that earlier," said Mariane. "We could have done ourselves a bit of good, too."

"It's not too late," Wilhelm replied, and gave Barbara a gold coin. "Go and get what we want; and you can have some with us."

The old woman hurried off, and in no time a well arranged collation was set out before the lovers. Barbara had to join them. They ate, drank—and were merry.

On such occasions there is never any lack of entertainment. Mariane took out her Jonathan, and the old woman steered the conversation to Wilhelm's favorite subject: "You once told us," she said, "about the first performance of your puppet theater one Christmas Eve. It was very amusing, and you were interrupted just when your ballet was about to begin. But now we have met with the distinguished cast that produced such splendid effects."

"Yes," said Mariane, "do tell us more, and what your feelings were at the time."

"It is always pleasant, my dear, to remember old times and our past, but harmless, mistakes. Especially when this occurs as we feel we have achieved a high point from which we can now look about and reflect on the path that

brought us to this lofty view. It is pleasant and satisfying to remember the obstacles that we sadly thought were insurmountable, and then compare what we, as mature persons, have now developed into, with what we were then, in our immaturity. I cannot tell you how happy I am now that I can talk to you about the past—now that I gaze out towards the joyous landscape that we shall travel hand in hand.”

“Well—how was that ballet?” interrupted the old woman. “I fear that it didn’t turn out as well as it should have.”

“Oh, yes, it did,” said Wilhelm. “It was just fine! Those marvelous leaps of the Moors, the shepherds and the dwarves—little men and women—have remained something like a dim memory through all my later life. The curtain came down, the door closed and we all went off to bed, dizzy and drunk with delight—but I couldn’t sleep. I wanted to know more, and was still so eager to ask questions that I didn’t want the nursemaid who put us to bed to leave.

“Next morning that magic structure had vanished, the mystic curtain was gone and you could once again move without hindrance from one room to the next. All the enchantment had disappeared and left no trace. My sisters and brothers ran about with their toys, but I crept around silent and alone. It seemed impossible that there should be just two doorposts where the night before there had been such wonders. No one, not even if he were looking for a lost love, could have been more unhappy than I seemed to be.”

His glance at Mariane, filled with joy, convinced her that he had no fear of ever being in such an unhappy state.

Chapter Four

“My only wish,” Wilhelm continued, “was to see a second performance. I talked to my mother, and when the moment seemed right, she tried to persuade my father; but all her efforts were fruitless. He insisted that if a pleasure was to have any value, it must be infrequent, and that young and old don’t appreciate the good things that come their way every day.

“We would have had to wait a long time, perhaps till the following Christmas, if the maker and secret director of the theater had not himself wanted to repeat the performance and in an epilogue introduced a clown he had just made.

“A young soldier from the artillery, who had all sorts of talents and especially great mechanical skill, had helped my father considerably in the building of our house and been handsomely rewarded for this; but he wanted to show his special gratitude to the family at Christmastime, and made us a present of this fully equipped theater which he had put together and painted in his free time. He was the one who, with the help of a servant, had animated the puppets and recited the various parts in different tones of voice. It was not hard for him to persuade my father, who gladly granted to a friend the

favor he as a matter of principle had refused his own children. So, the theater was set up again, some children invited from the neighborhood, and the play was repeated.

“The first time I had the joy of surprise and astonishment; at the second performance I was intensely curious and observant. This time I wanted to find out exactly how everything was done. I had decided on that first evening that it couldn’t be the puppets themselves that were speaking, I had even suspected that they could not move by themselves. But why it was all so agreeable, and why the puppets themselves seemed to speak and move, and where the lights were, and the people who operated all this—these mysteries disturbed me so much that I wanted to be both among the enchanted and the enchanters, somehow secretly to have a hand in it, and at the same time, as a spectator, be able to enjoy the pleasure of the illusion.

“The play came to an end, and preparations were being made for the epilogue. The audience stood up and chatted. I made my way to the door and from the clatter that was going on inside, realized that they were clearing up. I lifted the lower curtain, and looked through the framework. My mother noticed me and pulled me back; but I had already seen how my friends and foes, Saul and Goliath, and whoever all the others were, were being put away in a drawer. This was fresh nourishment for my half-satisfied curiosity. To my great astonishment I saw the lieutenant busy in this sanctuary. And as a result the clown in the epilogue, despite his heel-clattering, had no appeal for me. I was lost in thought, and after this discovery seemed both calmer and more restless than before. Having discovered something, I felt that I didn’t really know anything, and I was right: for what I lacked was a sense of the enterprise as a whole, and that after all is the most important thing.”

Chapter Five

“Children in well-established and well-organized homes feel rather like rats and mice: They seek out cracks and crannies to find their way to forbidden dainties. The furtive and intense fear with which they indulge in this search is one of the joys of childhood.

“I noticed more quickly than any of my sisters or brothers when a key was left in a lock. Much as I respected those closed doors, when I had to walk past them week after week or month after month, I would peek in unobserved when my mother opened that sanctuary to get something out, and I was quick to use the brief moments which the negligent housekeeper sometimes provided.

“As could be expected it was the pantry door that drew my sharpest attention. Few joys of anticipation matched those when my mother called me in to help her carry something and, whether by her kindness or my cunning, I managed to pick up some dried prunes. Those piles of wonderful things filled

my imagination with a sense of abundance, and the marvelous smell of all the spices had such a mouth-watering effect on me that I never failed to breathe in deeply when I was nearby. One Sunday morning this special key was left in the keyhole as my mother was caught unawares by the bells ringing for the church service and the rest of the house was wrapped in sabbath stillness. As soon as I noticed it, I crept gingerly along the wall, moved quietly to the door, opened it, and with one stride was in the midst of so many long-desired delights. I rapidly scrutinized all the chests, sacks, boxes, cases and jars and, wondering what to take, I finally picked up some of my beloved prunes, some dried apples and some preserved pomegranate skin, and was about to slip out with my loot when I noticed some boxes with wires and hooks hanging out of the lids, which had not been properly closed. I had an idea what these might be, fell upon them and discovered to my delight that here packed away was the whole world of my joys and my heroes. I tried to pick up the ones on top to look at them, and then those underneath, but soon I had tangled up all the wires and got very upset and frightened, especially since I heard the cook moving in the adjoining kitchen. I stuffed everything back as quickly as I could and closed the drawer, taking with me only a handwritten little book, the play of David and Goliath, which had been lying on top, and with my booty escaped to the attic.

“From this time on I spent every hour that I could have by myself in reading over and over ‘my’ play, learning it by heart, and imagining how wonderful it would be if with my own fingers I could bring the figures to life. I felt myself becoming David and Goliath. I absorbed the play by studying it wherever I could find a corner—in the attic, the stable or the garden—I took each part and memorized it thoroughly, except that I caught myself taking the parts of the main characters and imagining the others trotting along like attendants. The grandiose speeches of David, in which he challenged the boastful Goliath, filled my mind day and night; I muttered them to myself, but no one paid attention except my father who sometimes noticed one of my exclamations and secretly praised the good memory of his son, who seemed to have retained so much after so little listening. As a result I became bolder and one evening recited almost the whole play to my mother, making actors out of lumps of wax. She seemed surprised and wanted an explanation—and I confessed.

“Fortunately all this occurred just when the lieutenant had proposed to initiate me into the secrets of the performance. My mother told him about my unexpected talent, and the lieutenant managed to get permission to use some rooms on the top floor of the house, which were usually empty: one for the spectators and one for the actors, with the doorway between as proscenium. My father allowed his friend to do all this, pretended not to be aware of it, as he was convinced that one ought not to let children see how much one loves them, or else they will ever ask for more. One should appear stern while they are enjoying themselves, and sometimes spoil their pleasures so that they do not become too easily satisfied—and impertinent.”

Chapter Six

"The lieutenant set up the theater and looked after everything else. I had noticed him several times during the week coming into the house at an unusual hour, and suspected what was going on. My eagerness increased amazingly, as I knew I couldn't take part in what was being prepared until the following Saturday. But at last the longed-for day arrived, and at five o'clock the lieutenant took me upstairs. Trembling with joy I entered the room and saw the puppets hanging on both sides of the stage, in the order they were to appear. I studied them carefully, and then climbed on the step which set me above the stage, so that I seemed suspended above this miniature world. With a sense of awe, I looked down between the boards, because I remembered how splendid it had all seemed from the outside, and realized that I was now being initiated into the inner mysteries. We made a trial run and everything worked beautifully.

"The next day, in a performance before a group of children we had invited, we managed well, except that in the heat of the moment I dropped my Jonathan and had to reach down with my hand to pick him up—an accident which destroyed the illusion, provoked much laughter, and upset me greatly. My father seemed pleased by this slip-up, for very wisely he kept his pride in my skill to himself and, when the play was over, rather concentrated on the mistakes, and said that it would have been nice if only this or that hadn't gone wrong.

"I was deeply hurt and was miserable all evening, but by next morning had slept off my irritation and was now happy at the thought that, apart from one mishap, I had done very well. The applauding spectators had all agreed that though the lieutenant used coarse and refined tones of voice to good effect, his speech had on the whole been too artificial and stiff, whereas the new helper spoke his David and Jonathan to perfection. My mother praised especially the straightforward way in which I had summoned Goliath to battle and later presented the modest victor to the King.

"To my great joy, the theater remained set up and when spring arrived and we could do without a fire, I spent all my free time in my room playing with the puppets. Often enough I invited my brothers and sisters as well as friends; and if they didn't want to come, I played alone, my imagination brooding over that little world, which soon began to take on a different shape.

"After I had several times performed that first play for which theater and actors had been set up, I began to lose interest in it. But among my grandfather's books I found the collection of plays by Professor Gottsched called 'The German Stage,' and texts of several operas in German and Italian, in which I immersed myself, and, having counted up the characters at the beginning of the text, proceeded to perform the play. As a result King Saul in his black velvet robe now had to stand for some tyrant, or for Darius, or Cato. Usually it was not the whole play but only the fifth act, where the stabbing to death took place, that was performed.

"It was quite natural that the operas with their constant changes of scene and ever new adventures should appeal to me most. For they had everything—storms at sea, gods descending in clouds and, what I especially liked, thunder and lightning. Using cardboard, paper and paint, I provided an excellent night sky: The lightning was fearsome, though the thunder didn't always work. But that didn't matter much. There were also more opportunities to make use of my David and Goliath in the operas than in regular plays. I became more and more attached to that little room where so much pleasure had come my way; and I must admit that the smell of the larder, which still clung to the puppets, added considerably to my delight.

"The scenery for my theater was now pretty well complete, for I had always had a knack for using compasses, cutting up cardboard and making sketches. Now I was all the more disappointed that the limited number of available puppets should prevent me from performing more demanding plays.

"When I saw my sisters dressing and undressing their dolls, I had the idea of getting exchangeable clothes for my heroes. The costumes were taken off in small sections, and I recombined them as well as I could. I saved some money, bought ribbons and finery, begged bits of taffeta, and little by little assembled a whole collection of stage costumes, not forgetting hooped skirts for the ladies.

"I now had enough costumes for even the longest play and, one would have thought that other plays would surely follow. But what often happens with children happened to me. They think up grand schemes and make elaborate preparations, perhaps even a trial run, but ultimately nothing materializes. I made the same mistake. My greatest pleasure was in inventing and imagining. A play interested me only because of a particular scene, for which I immediately had new costumes made. As a result the original costumes got into a state of complete disorder, some had disappeared, so that we could not do even the first of our full-length plays again. I was living entirely in my imagination, trying out this or that, always planning, building a thousand castles in the air, but not realizing that I had destroyed the very foundations of this small world."

During this long recital, Mariane had been at pains to conceal her sleepiness by mustering all her affection toward Wilhelm. Amusing as the whole business might seem in one sense, she found it all too simple, and Wilhelm's commentary too ponderous. She would tenderly place her foot on his, and gave what appeared to be signs of attentiveness and approval. She drank from his glass, and Wilhelm was persuaded that not a word of his narration had been lost.

After a while he said: "Now it is your turn, Mariane, to tell me about the first joys of your childhood. We have been much too busy with the present to be concerned about the past. Tell me, how were you brought up and what early impressions do you remember?"

These questions might have been embarrassing for Mariane, if the old woman had not come to her aid. "Do you really believe," she said sensibly, "that we took so much notice of what happened to us earlier in life, that we

have such pleasant things to tell as you have, and even if we did, that we could describe them so cleverly?"

"As if that were necessary!" Wilhelm exclaimed. "I love this tender, sweet, good, lovely girl so much that I would regret every moment of my life that I spent without her. Let me at least share, in my imagination, in your past life. Tell me all about it and I will tell you about mine. Let's use our imagination as much as possible, and try to recover those past times that were lost to our love."

"If you insist, we can certainly satisfy you on that score," said old Barbara. "But you tell us first how your love of the theater grew, how you rehearsed so that you are now quite a good performer. Surely there must have been some amusing incidents. It's not worth going to bed now; I have another bottle in reserve, and who knows when we shall be together again like this, so relaxed and content."

Mariane looked at her with a melancholy glance, but Wilhelm did not notice it and continued with his story.

Chapter Seven

"The distractions of youth began to take their toll of the solitary pleasures, especially when the circle of my friends grew larger. I was huntsman, foot-soldier, cavalryman, as our games demanded; but I always had a slight edge over the others, because I could provide the necessary properties for these occasions: The swords were mostly from my workshop, it was I who decorated and gilded the sleds, and some curious instinct made me transform our whole militia into Romans. We made helmets and topped them with paper plumes; we made shields, even suits of armor, and many a needle was broken by those of our servants who knew how to sew or make clothes. Some of my young comrades were now well armed, the rest were gradually, though not quite so elaborately, equipped, and soon we were a respectable army. We marched into courtyards and gardens, knocking against each other's shields and heads; there were occasional fights, but these were settled easily enough.

"These games, which much appealed to my friends, very soon ceased to please me. The sight of all those armed figures only intensified visions of knights and knighthood which, since I had taken to reading old romances, had recently been filling my mind.

"A translation of Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* that I happened to find gave my rambling thoughts a definite direction. I could, of course, not read the whole poem, but there were passages in it that I soon knew by heart and whose images haunted me. Especially Clorinda, in all that she did, fascinated me. Her almost masculine femininity, the serenity of her being had a stronger effect on my developing mind than the artificial charms of Armida, however much I was captivated by her 'Bower of Bliss.'

"Time and again in the evening I walked on the balcony between the gables, looking out over the landscape that was illuminated by the last quivering gleam of the setting sun on the horizon, the first stars coming out. As darkness descended from every depth and corner and crickets chirped through the solemn stillness, I recited to myself the sad story of that final combat between Tancred and Clorinda.

"Although I was quite properly on the side of the Christians, my whole heart stood by the heathen Clorinda as she was about to set fire to the tower of the besiegers. And when at night Tancred came upon the supposed warrior, the combat began under cover of darkness and they fought so fiercely, I could never, without tears coming to my eyes, utter the words:

But now the measure of Clorinda's days is full
The hour draws near, the hour when she must die.

My tears flowed freely as the unhappy lover plunged his sword into her breast, loosened her helmet, recognized who it was, and trembling, fetched water to baptize her. And how my heart overflowed when Tancred's sword struck the tree in the enchanted wood, blood spurted out and a voice resounded in his ears, telling him that he had wounded Clorinda again, that he was destined unwittingly to harm everything he ever loved!

"My imagination was so enthralled by this story, and everything that I had read in the poem began to form some kind of whole in my mind that I longed somehow to perform it on the stage. I wanted to play both Tancred and Rinaldo, and found two suits of armor that I had made which were quite suitable for these characters. One, made of dark-grey paper with scales, would do for the sober Tancred, the other, gold and silver, for the dazzling Rinaldo. Excited by the whole idea, I told my friends the entire story; they were thrilled, but wondered how all this could be performed, and by them.

"I easily dispelled their hesitation. I decided to take over a few rooms in the neighboring house of one of my friends, without considering that the old lady would on no account let us have them. And I had no clear notion of how to set up a stage, except that it must rest on beams, and we would use folding screens for scenery and a big sheet for the backdrop. But where the materials and tools to make all this were to come from, I had absolutely no idea.

"We found a good way to produce a forest by persuading a fellow who had been a servant in one of the households and was now a forester, to find us some young birches and spruces, which, as a matter of fact, arrived sooner than we had expected. Now the problem was how to put on the play before the trees withered. We sorely needed advice, for we had no room, no stage, no curtain—only the folding screens.

In this predicament we once again approached the lieutenant, giving him an elaborate account of all the splendor that was in the offing. Though he scarcely understood what we were really about, he did help us by pushing

together in the little room all the tables we could find, setting up the side walls on these and making a backdrop of green curtains; the trees were placed in a row.

“Evening came, the candles were lit, children and maidservants settled in their places, the company of warriors were all decked out in their costumes and the play was about to begin. Suddenly it dawned on us for the first time that we didn’t know what we were going to say. My imagination was so excited by the whole enterprise that I had completely forgotten that everyone should know what and when he had to speak. The others, so thrilled to be performing, hadn’t thought about it either. They imagined that all they had to do was to present themselves as heroes and that it would be easy to act and speak like the characters in the world I had told them about. Now they all stood in astonishment, wondering what was to happen next, and having from the beginning thought of myself as Tancred, I came on alone and began to recite some of Tancred’s words from the poem. But since the passage soon turned into a narration where I was referred to in the third person, and Godfrey was mentioned without actually appearing on the stage, I had to withdraw, much to the amusement of the spectators—a mishap which grieved me greatly. The whole show turned out to be a failure.

“The audience sat there waiting to see something; and as anyway we were all in our costumes, I pulled myself together and decided to play David and Goliath instead. My fellow actors had seen this at the puppet theater many times, some had even assisted me. We divided up the parts, everyone promised to do his best, and a funny little fellow painted a black beard on his chin so that he could come on as a clown if there was any unforeseen hitch in the performance. I did not like to do this, for I thought it would detract from the solemnity of the play. But I swore that once I was out of this fix, I would never again put on a play without a great deal more thought.”

Chapter Eight

Mariane, overcome by sleep, had put her head on her lover’s shoulder. He held her tight while he continued his narration; Barbara finished off in a leisurely fashion what remained of the wine.

“The embarrassment of having tried to perform a nonexistent play was soon forgotten. My passionate determination to turn any novel that I read, any story that I heard from my teachers, into a play was not to be diminished by even the most unsuitable subject matter. I was convinced that any story that appealed to me would be still more effective on the stage, where I could actually see it happening before my eyes. When we were taught world history at school, I reflected in great detail on the particular way in which a personage was stabbed or poisoned; my imagination leapt over exposition and

development, and hurried to the much more interesting fifth act. And so I actually started to compose a few plays from the ending and working back to the beginning. At the same time, both on my own impulse and at the instigation of like-minded friends, I read my way through a whole stack of plays—whatever happened to come to hand. I was at that happy age when one delights in all sorts of things, when plenty and variety satisfy. My judgment was warped in still another way: My preference was for plays in which I thought I would myself have particular success, and I read few plays where I did not feel this would be the case. My lively imagination, by which I could put myself into any part, misled me into thinking that I could successfully act them all. As I distributed the parts, I gave myself roles for which I was not at all suited and, if possible, gave myself more than one.

“When children play, they can make something out of anything: A stick becomes a gun, a piece of wood a sword, any old bundle a doll, and any corner a hut. This is how our little theater came about. Totally unaware of our limited abilities, we embarked on anything and everything; we never realized that we sometimes confused one character with another, and assumed that everyone would take us for what we claimed to be. The results were so ordinary and uninteresting that I don’t have even one amusing piece of silliness to report. First we performed the few plays that had only male characters. After that some of us dressed up as women, using what costumes we had. And finally we persuaded our sisters to join in. A few of our families thought that what we were doing was useful enough, and invited some friends. And our lieutenant did not leave us in the lurch. He showed us how to enter and exit, how to declaim, how to use gestures. But he got little thanks for his pains, for we were sure that we knew more about acting than he did.

“We started with tragedies, because we had heard—and believed it—that it is easier to write and perform a tragedy than to excel in comedy. We really felt in our element when we tried our hand at tragedy, representing high social station and nobility of character by a certain stiffness and affectation. We thought we really amounted to something. But we weren’t completely happy until we could rant, stamp our feet, and in rage and desperation, throw ourselves on the ground.

“It was not long before natural instincts began to stir in boys and girls, and the company divided up into little love affairs—plays within plays. In the wings, the couples held hands tenderly, idealizing each other in their beribboned finery, while the disappointed rivals, eaten up with envy and spite, embarked on all sorts of mischief.

“Yet, all this playacting, though it lacked both understanding and direction, was not without its usefulness. We trained our memory, exercised our bodies, achieved greater ease in speaking and greater refinement in behavior than children at that age usually acquire. Certainly, now, for me that time was a turning point, because as a result my whole being was directed towards the theater and from then on I knew no greater pleasure than reading, writing and performing plays.

"At school, lessons with my teachers continued, and since it had been decided that I should go in for commerce, I was assigned to work in a neighbor's firm. But at the same time, my whole being rebelled violently against what I could only consider a base occupation. I wanted to devote myself entirely to the stage, there to find my happiness and satisfaction.

"I remember writing a poem, which must still be somewhere among my papers, in which the Muse of Tragedy and another female figure representing Commerce were struggling for possession of my worthy self. The whole idea is, of course, trivial and I don't remember whether the verse was any good, but you should have seen it, if only to get an idea of the fear and horror, the love and passion that I put into it. How timid was my portrayal of the old housewife with her keys and distaff, spectacles on her nose, always busy and bustling, quarrelsome and domestic, petty and pompous! How pitiful my account of those who had to submit to her and perform their menial duties in the sweat of their brow.

"And how different the other figure! What a vision for an oppressed spirit! Noble of stature, she was in every ounce of her being and behavior the true daughter of freedom. Her sense of herself gave her dignity and pride. Her garments suited her perfectly, the wide folds of her dress moved like echoes of the graceful movements of a divine creature. What a contrast between the two! You can well imagine which way my inclination turned. And my muse had all the accoutrements—crowns and daggers, chains and masks—that our literary predecessors had given their muses. The altercation between these two females was heated, their speeches, in the usual black-and-white of a fourteen-year-old, suitably contrasted. The old woman talked like one who had to pick up and save every pin, and the other as though she were distributing kingdoms. The warnings and threats of the old woman were treated with scorn; I turned my back on the riches she promised me, and, naked and disinherited, I gave myself to the muse who lent me her golden veil to cover my nakedness.

"If only I could have imagined," Wilhelm exclaimed as he pressed Mariane close to him, "that another and more lovely goddess would confirm me in my resolve and accompany me on my path—my poem would have turned out much better and achieved a far more interesting ending! But life in your arms is no poem—it is reality. Let us savor the sweet joy in full consciousness."

His voice was so loud and his grasp so tight that Mariane suddenly woke up. She tried to conceal her embarrassment by carressing him, for she had not heard one single word of the last part of his narration; it is to be hoped that in the future our hero will find more attentive listeners for his favorite stories.

Chapter Nine

And so Wilhelm spent his nights in the intimate pleasures of love and his days in anticipation of further hours of bliss. Earlier, when he had set his desire and hopes on winning Mariane, he had begun to feel a different person. Now that

he was joined to her, the satisfaction of his desires became a pleasant habitual occupation. His heart strove to ennoble the object of his affections, and his mind to lift them both on to a higher plane. He was always thinking of her when for a short time she was not with him. She had been important to him before—now she was indispensable, because he was bound to her by every fiber of his being, and his mind felt, in all its unclouded innocence, that she was half—more than half—of himself. He was grateful, and absolutely devoted, to her.

Mariane, too, was able to deceive herself for a while, because she shared his feeling of intense joy, despite the cold reproaches that sometimes passed over her heart and from which she was never entirely free even in his embraces and the exhilaration of his love. When she was alone and had descended from the heights to which his passion had transported her back into a true sense of her position, she was indeed to be pitied. Her natural frivolity sustained her as long as she lived thoughtlessly, not realizing or even knowing the situation she was really in, she would take this or that incident as just part of a total picture, and cheerfully alternate between pleasure and displeasure, humiliation and pride, deprivation and momentary abundance, accepting necessity and habituation as a justifiable law of living, and shaking off any feeling of unpleasantness from one moment to the next. But now, when for moments this poor girl felt herself transported to a better world and looked down from all this sunshine and joy to the drab emptiness of her ordinary life, aware of the wretchedness of not being able to inspire love and respect as well as arousing desire, and therefore no better off than she was before, she found nothing in herself to help her rise above this state of mind, for her mind was empty and her heart had no resistance. The sadder she felt, the more she clung to her passion for her beloved, which grew stronger from day to day, as the danger of losing him loomed ever larger.

But Wilhelm soared happily in loftier regions. For him, too, a new world had opened up, a world with vistas of endless delight. The full measure of his initial joy was succeeded by a clear realization of what had obscurely moved him before: "She is yours! She has given herself to you who loved, sought and adored her—given herself in faith and trust to you, and not to someone who is ungrateful." He talked to himself, no matter where he was. His heart was full to the brim and he recited to himself the loftiest of sentiments in the most grandiloquent phrases. Fate, he decided, was extending its helping hand to him, through Mariane, to draw him out of that stifling, draggle-tailed middle-class existence he had so long desired to escape. It seemed to him the easiest thing in the world to leave his family and his father's house. He was young and inexperienced in the ways of the world, eager to seek happiness and contentment anywhere, and elated by love. That his future lay in the theater had now become quite clear to him, and the high goal that he envisioned for himself seemed nearer to realization as he aspired to the hand of Mariane. In self-satisfied modesty he saw in himself the great actor, the founder of a future

National Theater that he heard various people pining for. Everything that had been dormant in the recesses of his heart suddenly came alive. From all these thoughts and aspirations he painted, with colors from the palette of love, a picture against a misty background; the fact that the figures in the picture were not easily distinguishable made the general effect all the more pleasing.

Chapter Ten

He now sat at home, rummaging amongst his papers and preparing for his departure. What smacked of earlier intentions was put aside, for he did not want to take anything with him on his journey into the wide world that might arouse unpleasant memories. Only works embodying good taste, poets and critics, were admitted as trusty friends to the company of the Elect. Up to now he had not spent much time on critics, and so he looked through his books in search of enlightenment but found that the theoretical works were still mostly uncut. He had acquired many such works in the full conviction that they would be essential to him; yet, with the best will in the world, he had never succeeded in getting further than halfway into any of them. But he had zealously read model texts, and tried his hand at writing in those styles he had become familiar with.

Werner came in, and seeing his friend busied with his manuscripts, said: "Are you poring over those things again? I bet you don't intend to finish any of them. You'll just look through them again and again—and then start something new."

"It is not the business of a pupil to finish a thing. He should try his hand at everything."

"But surely he should finish them as best he can."

"But you can also consider it promising if a young man does not continue with something that he feels is clumsily done, and refuses to spend more time and effort on something that can never have any value."

"I know that you were never concerned with bringing something to completion; you were always tired of it before it was half done. When you were directing our puppet theater, new costumes always had to be made for our little company and new sets constructed. First one tragedy was to be performed, then another, and the most you ever put on was the fifth act where everything got confusing and people stabbed each other."

"Since you are talking about those days, tell me: Who was responsible for taking apart the costumes we had fitted to our puppets, and setting up a large and useless wardrobe? Wasn't it you who was always trying to sell us some new ribbon or other, and you who encouraged this hobby of mine to your own advantage?"

Werner laughed, and said: "I still remember with delight how I profited from your theatrical forays, like suppliers from the wars. While you were

preparing to deliver Jerusalem, I made a handsome profit, much as the Venetians did on a similar occasion. I think there is nothing in life more sensible than making profit out of the follies of others."

"I would think it a nobler pleasure to cure people of their follies."

"That might be a fruitless undertaking, judging from the people I know. It takes some effort to be smart and become rich, and that usually happens at the cost of others."

"I have just found that poem I wrote called 'The Youth at the Crossroads,'" said Wilhelm, pulling out a copybook. "That *was* finished, such as it was."

"Throw it out! Burn it!" said Werner. "As a piece of artistic invention it was not remarkable. It irritated me at the time and displeased your father. The verses were pretty enough but the whole presentation was absolutely wrong. I well remember your personification of commerce as a miserable, shrivelled-up old witch. You must have filched that portrait from some old junk shop. At the time you had no idea what the world of business is really like. The mind of a true businessman is more wide-ranging than that of all other men—has to be so. What an overview we gain by the orderly fashion in which we conduct business. It permits us to survey the whole without being confused by the parts. What tremendous advantages accrue to the businessman by double bookkeeping. This is one of the finest inventions of the human mind, and every serious manager should introduce it into his business."

"Forgive me," said Wilhelm with a smile, "but you are treating form as though it were substance, and in all your adding up and balancing of accounts you usually ignore the true sum total of life."

"Unfortunately, my friend, you don't seem to understand that in this case form and substance are identical, in that the one cannot exist without the other. Order and clarity increase the desire to save and to acquire. A man who doesn't keep good accounts, who doesn't reckon up what he owes, easily finds himself in a foggy state, whereas a good manager knows no greater pleasure than watching his fortunes mounting daily. A setback may be an unpleasant surprise for him, but it does not scare him; he can balance this out with the gains he has made elsewhere. I am convinced, my friend, that if you could only acquire some lively interest in our affairs, you would convince yourself that many faculties of the mind are freely involved in such matters."

"Maybe the journey I am about to undertake will make me change my opinions!"

"Surely it will. Believe me, all you need is to see for yourself some big enterprise, and you will feel yourself one of us. And when you come back you will be glad to join those who know how, by speculating and the transmission of goods, to acquire part of the money and prosperity that must always circulate in the world. Just look at the natural and artificial products of every country and see how, now the one, now the other, have become necessities. What a pleasant exercise of careful ingenuity it is to find out what is most wanted at a given moment and is therefore bound to be in short supply and difficult to

get. You can quickly and easily provide everyone with what is needed by building up stocks in advance, and reaping the advantages of wide circulation. That, it seems to me, should appeal greatly to anyone who has a head on his shoulders."

Wilhelm seemed not to disapprove, and so Werner went on: "First visit a few big trading centers, a few seaports, and you will certainly be fascinated. When you see how many people are occupied, and how many things come in and go out, you will surely enjoy seeing them pass through your own hands. You will see the smallest commodity in relation to trade in general, and as a result you will not consider anything insignificant because everything increases the circulation from which your life too receives its nourishment."

Werner, who had sharpened his own mind by his contact with Wilhelm, had come to think of his trade and business activities in terms of spiritual elevation, and always believed that he did so with greater justification than his otherwise sensible and respected friend who placed such high value, indeed the whole weight of his soul, on what seemed to Werner the most unreal thing in the world. He sometimes thought that such false enthusiasm could not fail to be overcome and this good fellow be brought back on to the right path. And so, with such hopes, he continued: "The mighty of this world have seized the earth and live in luxury and splendor. Every small corner of this earth is already taken possession of, every property firmly established. Official positions do not bring in much in remuneration. What other regular occupation, what more reasonable means of aggrandizement is there than trade? The princes of this world control the rivers, roads and harbors and make good profits from what goes through them or past them. Why shouldn't we also relish the opportunity of extracting by our labors custom duties on those articles made indispensable by the requirements and caprices of men and women? And I can assure you that if you would but engage your poetic imagination, you could establish *my* Goddess as the undoubted victor over yours. She bears the olive branch rather than the sword, has no daggers and chains, but she does distribute crowns to her favorites, which, it can be said without demeaning that other woman in your poem, are of pure gold from mountain streams and gleaming with pearls fetched from the depths of the ocean by her always industrious helpers."

Wilhelm was somewhat peeved by this outburst, but concealed his irritation, for he remembered that Werner used to listen to his speeches without losing his composure. He was also reasonable enough to be pleased when people spoke so warmly about their occupations—but they should not demean his own, which he had espoused with such fervor.

"And since you take such an interest in human affairs," Werner exclaimed, "what a spectacle it will be for you to see what joy accompanies bold enterprises for those who take part in them! What could be more pleasing than the sight of a ship returning from a successful journey, a trawler returning early with a good catch! Everyone is excited—relatives, friends, associates, even

complete strangers—when the shipbound sailor leaps joyfully on land even before his boat touches it, feeling free once more and ready to entrust to solid land what he has extracted from the treacherous water. Profit is not just a matter of figures, my friend—Fortune is the sovereign goddess of all living things, and, to experience her favors fully, one must *live* and see people who exert their powers and enjoy their senses.”

Chapter Eleven

It is high time that we become better acquainted with the fathers of these two friends. They were two very different temperaments but of one mind in that they regarded commerce as the noblest of all occupations and were attentive to every advantage to be gained by speculation. Wilhelm’s father had, on the death of his own father, sold a valuable collection of paintings, drawings, etchings and antiques, had remodelled and refurnished his house from the ground up, all in the newest taste. He used what remained of his capital in various profitable ways, investing a considerable part of it in the business of Werner’s father, who was respected for his initiative and for his speculative ventures, which usually turned out to his advantage. What he desired above all else was to impart to his son Wilhelm the qualities that he himself lacked, and to leave to his children those possessions which he particularly valued. He had indeed a certain penchant for sumptuousness, for what was impressive and yet had real lasting value. Everything had to be solid and massive in his house—plentiful provisions, heavy silver, costly china—but there were few guests, for every party turned into a celebration which, owing to cost and inconvenience, could not be repeated very often. His household was characterized by calm and monotony, and any change or innovation was always in those things which gave no one any pleasure.

Old Werner led a totally different life in his dark and gloomy house. Once he had finished his day’s work at his decrepit old desk in his poky office, all he wanted to do was to eat well and, if possible, drink even better. He did not like to enjoy good things by himself, and so he wanted, beside his close family, to have all his friends, even strangers who had any sort of connection with his business, at his table. The chairs were very old but every day he invited someone to sit on them. The guests were so much attracted by the good quality of the food that they never noticed that it was served in very ordinary dishes. His cellar did not contain much wine, but when a bottle was finished it was usually replaced by a better one.

This is how they lived, these two fathers who often consulted each other on business matters, and this very day they had decided to send Wilhelm on a commercial journey.

“Let him see the world,” said old Meister, “and at the same time do business for us in various places. There is nothing better one can do for a young man

than introduce him early to his future career. Your son profited so much from his expedition and conducted his affairs so well, that I am curious to see how my son makes out, but I fear he will need more money than yours did." He had a high opinion of his son's ability, and so, in saying this, had hoped that the other would contradict him and emphasize Wilhelm's excellent qualities. But he was mistaken, for old Werner, who in practical matters trusted no one that he had not himself tested, calmly added: "One should try everything. We could send him on the same route and give him instructions to follow. There are debts to be collected, old acquaintanceships to be renewed and new ones to be made. He could also help to advance the venture I talked to you about recently, for we can do little unless we gather exact information on the spot."

"Let him get ready then, and leave as soon as possible," said Wilhelm's father. "But where shall we get a suitable horse for him?"

"We won't have to look far for that. There is a shopkeeper in H. . . who still owes us money, a good fellow who has offered me a horse in lieu of payment. My son has seen it; it seems to be perfectly acceptable."

"Well, let him go and get it. If he takes the postchaise he can be back in good time the day after tomorrow, and in the meantime we can get his bag ready and the letters he is to deliver, so that he could leave early next week."

They called Wilhelm and told him of their decision. He was absolutely delighted that the means to achieve his purpose were being provided for him without his having to find them for himself. He was so passionately convinced that he was doing the right thing in escaping from the burden of his present form of life by embarking on a new and nobler course that he did not have the least pangs of conscience or anxiety: Indeed, he felt that this deception was somehow sanctioned by Heaven. He was sure that his parents and relations would eventually approve the step he was about to take. He perceived in this concatenation of circumstances the guiding hand of Fate.

How time dragged till nightfall, when he would be able to see his beloved again! He sat in his room, thinking over his travel plans, like a crafty thief or magician in prison, easing his feet out of the shackles that bind him in order to persuade himself that liberation is not only possible, but nearer than his imperceptive goalers imagine. But at last the longed-for hour arrived, he left the house and, shaking off all sense of oppression, he walked through the quiet streets, raising his hands to Heaven on the open square, disembarrassed, discarding everything, imagining himself in Mariane's arms, then alongside her in the bright lights of the theater, transported in a welter of hopes and anticipations, until the voice of the night watchman sounding the hours reminded him that he was still on this earth.

She met him on the stairs, and how beautiful, how lovely, she was. She was wearing her new white negligé, and he thought she had never looked so charming. For the first time she wore the gift of her absent lover in the arms of her present one, showering him passionately with natural affection and studied caresses, and — need we ask whether he was blissfully happy? He told her what

had happened, and gave her a general idea of his plans and desires. He would look for somewhere to live and then send for her; he hoped she would not refuse him her hand in marriage. The poor girl said nothing, suppressing her tears and clasping him to her breast. He interpreted her silence favorably, though he would have liked an answer, especially since he had recently asked her in all modesty, and in the gentlest terms, whether he was not about to become a father, to which she had only replied with a sigh, and a kiss.

Chapter Twelve

Next morning Mariane awoke once more in a sad state. She felt very much alone, did not want to begin the day, stayed in bed, and wept. The old woman sat by her and tried to talk to her and console her, but she did not succeed in healing this wounded heart so quickly. The moment was fast approaching which the poor girl had been dreading as if it were to be her last. Can one imagine a more anxious state than that she was in? The man she really loved was leaving, an unwelcome admirer was due to arrive any moment and it would be a real calamity if, which was perfectly possible, they were to encounter each other.

"Don't get upset, my dear, don't spoil your pretty eyes by weeping," said Barbara. "Is it such a misfortune to have two lovers? Even if you only love the one, you can always be grateful to the other who, by the way he looks after you, deserves to be called a friend."

But Mariane tearfully replied: "My dear Wilhelm sensed somehow that we would part; a dream told him what I had so carefully tried to conceal from him. He was sleeping so peacefully beside me, when suddenly I heard him murmuring barely audibly. I was frightened, and woke him up. How tenderly, how lovingly, how passionately he embraced me. 'Oh Mariane!' he said, 'What a frightful situation you rescued me from! How can I thank you for freeing me from such hell? I was dreaming that I was far away from you in some strange part of the country, but your image hovered before me and I saw you standing on a beautiful hilltop in the sunlight. How charming you looked! But it didn't last long: your image floated down from the hill, down and down, and I stretched out my arms to you, yet couldn't reach you. You were slipping towards a big lake at the foot of the hill, more of a swamp than a lake, when suddenly some man took your hand. He seemed to be wanting to lead you back up, but in fact led you off to the side, trying to drag you towards him. I called out, since I myself couldn't reach you, to warn you. When I tried to move, the ground held me fast, and when I could move, the water blocked me and even my cries were stifled in my anxious breast.'—That's what the poor fellow told me as he was recovering from his fright on my breast, happy at finding such a terrifying dream dispelled by blissful reality."

The old woman did her best in her own sober prose to bring Mariane from her flights of poetry down to everyday reality, using the tricks of birdcatchers,

who imitate on a tin whistle the song of those they wish to catch in their nets. So she praised Wilhelm—his figure, his eyes, his affection—and the unfortunate Mariane listened with approval, then got up, dressed and seemed calmer. “I don’t want to worry or offend you, or rob you of your happiness, my child,” the old woman said, ingratiatingly. “Don’t you understand what I have in mind? Don’t you know that I have always been more concerned for you than for myself? Just tell me what you want to do, and we’ll see how to bring it about.”

“How can I do anything?” Mariane replied. “I am miserable, and shall be miserable for the rest of my life. I love him, he loves me, and yet I see that I must part from him and don’t know how I can survive this. Norberg will come. We owe our whole existence to him. We cannot do without him. Wilhelm’s means are very limited. He cannot do anything for me.”

“Yes indeed, he is unfortunately one of those lovers who have nothing to give but their heart and are therefore the most demanding.”

“Don’t make fun of him! Unfortunately he intends to leave home, go on the stage, and offer me his hand.”

“We already have four empty hands between us, you and me.”

“I have no choice,” Mariane went on. “So why don’t *you* decide? Push me this way or that, but let me tell you one thing: I most likely carry a pledge within me that should bind us even closer together. Think of that, and decide: whom should I leave and whom should I follow?”

The old woman fell silent, then said: “Why do young people always think in terms of irreconcilable opposites? What could be more natural than to combine pleasure and profit? Why not love the one, and let the other pay? It’s only a question of our being smart enough to keep them apart.”

“Do as you like,” said Mariane. “I can’t think anymore. But I’ll do what you want.”

“The Director’s stubborn insistence on maintaining the good morals of his actors can be used to our advantage. Both your lovers are accustomed to go to work secretly and cautiously. I’ll arrange time and place, but you play the part I assign you. Who knows what circumstances might not assist us. If only Norberg would come now when Wilhelm is away! And who is to prevent you from thinking of the one when you are in the arms of the other? I hope you have a son. He shall have a rich father.”

Such thoughts did not encourage Mariane for long, for she could not reconcile her feelings or her conviction with her present situation, the misery of which she longed to forget, but a thousand small matters reminded her of it at every turn.



Chapter Thirteen

In the meantime Wilhelm had completed his short journey and delivered his letter of recommendation to the wife of the business associate to whom he had been sent, for the husband was not at home. She was not able to give much of

an answer to his questions, because she was much perturbed and the whole house was in a state of confusion.

However, she did not take long to inform him confidentially of something that could not be kept secret, namely that her stepdaughter had gone off with an actor, a creature who had recently left a small theatrical company, stayed for a while in this place, and given French lessons. The girl's father, beside himself with distress and irritation, had run to the authorities to have the fugitives pursued. The wife expressed her anger at the girl and her scorn of the lover with such vigor that nothing remained to be said in favor of either of them, and she vociferously bewailed the scandal that had befallen the family; she put Wilhelm in considerable embarrassment at finding his future, secret plans reviled and rejected by this sibyl, as if by some prophetic voice. But he was even more deeply affected by the deep sorrow and the half-uttered words of the father when he returned, and told his wife about his expedition to the authorities. He was unable to conceal his distraction and bewilderment; he read the letter and had the horse fetched for Wilhelm.

Wilhelm fully intended to mount his horse and leave this house where, under the circumstances, he could not possibly feel at ease, but the good man would not let the son of someone to whom he was so indebted leave without showing him due hospitality, and put him up for the night.

So our friend partook of a sad supper, spent a restless night, and left hurriedly next morning, to escape these people who by their tales and utterances had unwittingly so tormented him.

He was riding slowly and pensively down the street, when he saw a group of armed men crossing a field. From their long, baggy coats, wide lapels, shapeless hats and clumsy firearms, and their stolid gait and relaxed posture, he recognized them as a detachment of the local militia. They halted beneath an old oak tree, put down their flintlocks and settled comfortably on the grass to smoke a pipe. Wilhelm joined them and got into conversation with a young man who rode up on a horse. And so he had once again to hear the familiar story of the two fugitives, but this time laced with comments that were not especially favorable either to the young people or the parents. He also learned that the militiamen had come to take the young people, who had been stopped and apprehended in the neighboring town, into safe custody. Soon they saw a wagon drawing up, which was guarded in a fashion more ridiculous than terrifying. An unofficial looking town clerk rode ahead and exchanged compliments at the town limits with an actuary on the other side (the same young man that Wilhelm had been talking to), punctiliously and accompanied by fantastic gestures such as a magician and a spirit, the one inside and the other outside the magic circle, might well use during some ominous nocturnal operations.

Meanwhile all eyes were fixed on the farm-wagon; and the poor fugitives, who were sitting together on bundles of straw and gazing at each other lovingly and almost unaware of the bystanders, were observed with sympathy. It

so happened that they had had to be transported in this unsuitable way from the last village, because the old coach in which the girl had been placed had broken down. As a result she asked to be with her friend, who, because they believed him guilty of a capital crime, had been made to walk beside the coach, in heavy chains. The sight of this loving pair was made even more appealing by these chains, especially since the young man handled them gracefully as he repeatedly kissed his beloved's hands.

"We are very unhappy," she cried out, "but not so guilty as we may seem. This is how cruel people reward true love, and parents utterly neglectful of their children's happiness tear them away from the joy that is theirs after so much sadness."

The bystanders expressed their sympathy in various ways while the authorities went through their ceremonial actions. The wagon moved on, and Wilhelm, very concerned about the fate of the lovers, hurried ahead on a foot-path to make the acquaintance of the magistrate before the others arrived. But just before he reached the courthouse where everyone was busily preparing for the arrival of the fugitives, the actuary caught up with him and gave him a detailed account of all that had happened, and expansively praised his horse which he had got from some Jew the day before—which prevented any further conversation.

The unfortunate couple had been set down in the adjoining garden at the side of the building, and then led quietly into the courthouse. Wilhelm expressed to the actuary his appreciation of this consideration, though the actuary had simply wanted to play a trick on the people assembled in front of the courthouse by depriving them of the pleasing spectacle of a humiliated townswoman.

The magistrate was not especially fond of such unusual cases as this, because he usually made some mistake or other and, for all his good will, earned a harsh reproof from the government. He walked stolidly toward the courtroom where the actuary, Wilhelm and some of the respected citizens joined him.

The girl was the first to be led into the room. She showed respect as she came in, and a true sense of what she was. The way she was dressed and the nature of her behavior showed that she was indeed a self-respecting girl, and she began, without being asked, to talk about her situation in a seemly manner.

The actuary told her to be silent and held his pen over his opened sheaf of paper. The magistrate settled himself, looked at the actuary, cleared his throat, and then asked the girl what her name was, and how old she was.

"Well, sir," she replied, "it seems very odd that you ask for my name and my age, since you know very well who I am and that I am of the same age as your eldest son. I will gladly tell you without beating about the bush what you wish to know from me, and what you are required to find out.

"Since my father's second marriage I have not been at all well treated at home. I could have made several attractive matches if my stepmother had not

ruined everything by worrying about my dowry. And when I became acquainted with young Melina, I fell in love with him, and since we foresaw the obstacles that would be placed in our way, we decided to seek together the happiness in the world at large that seemed not likely to be granted to us at home. I have taken nothing with me that was not my own. We did not run off like thieves and robbers. And my friend has not deserved to be dragged around in chains and fetters. Our prince is just; he will not approve of such harshness. If we are guilty, we are not guilty in a way to justify such treatment.”

The old magistrate became doubly—and trebly—embarrassed at this. The prince’s reprimands were already buzzing in his head, and the girl’s fluent speech had completely wrecked his ideas on how to write up the case. His distress grew even worse when she repeatedly refused to say anything more and steadfastly insisted on what she had already maintained.

“I am not a criminal,” she said. “Yet, I was in shame brought here on bundles of straw. But there is a higher justice that will restore our honor.”

The actuary had in the meantime been writing down what she said and whispered to the magistrate that he should just continue. A formal protocol could easily be drawn up later. The old man was encouraged by this and began to enquire in plain terms and conventional dry phrases about the sweet secrets of love.

Wilhelm turned red at this, and the charming criminal herself blushed with shame. She maintained silence until her embarrassment finally gave her courage to speak. “Be assured,” she declared, “that I would not flinch at telling the truth, even if it meant discrediting myself, but in this case, when the truth does me honor, why should I hesitate and refuse to speak? Yes indeed, from the moment that I was convinced of his affection and loyalty, I thought of him as my husband. I gladly gave him everything that love demands and a heart that is sure of itself cannot deny. Do with me what you will. If I hesitated for a moment to confess all this, the reason was simply that I feared some evil consequences for my beloved.”

Having heard her confession, Wilhelm formed a high opinion of the girl’s character, whereas the officials treated her as a brazen hussy, and the good burghers in the courtroom were thankful that nothing like this had happened in their families—or at least was not public knowledge.

Wilhelm pictured his Mariane being thus brought to judgment, put even finer words in her mouth, and let her appear even more heartfelt in her sincerity and nobler in her confession. He was seized by the most passionate desire to help these two young lovers, and not concealing this, he quietly urged the magistrate to bring matters to a speedy conclusion, for everything was as clear as daylight and needed no further investigation. This helped, in the sense that the girl was told to step down; but the young man was ordered to come in, once they had removed his chains at the door. He seemed more concerned about his fate than she. His answers were more composed, and although in some ways he seemed less heroic than the girl, he made a good impression by

the precision and orderliness of his statements. After his examination, which coincided in every point with hers except that, to spare the girl, he resolutely denied what she had already admitted, she was brought in again, and there followed a scene which entirely won them Wilhelm's affection. For what usually happens only in plays and novels, was now played out before his very eyes in this wretched courtroom—generosity of each toward the other, the strength of love in misfortune.

"Is it then true," he said to himself, "that bashful affection, which shuns the light of day and only displays itself in extreme seclusion and deep secrecy, when it is dragged out into the open by hostile circumstance, reveals itself to be stronger, bolder, more courageous than the most raging, grandiloquent of passions?"

Much to his relief the whole affair was settled very quickly. The young people were placed in minimum confinement, and if it had been possible he would have returned the girl to her parents that very evening. For he decided to act as a mediator and help to bring about a happy and respectable union of these two young people. So he asked permission of the magistrate to talk with Melina alone, which was granted him without further ado.

Chapter Fourteen

Their conversation soon became quite friendly and lively. For when Wilhelm told the downcast youth about his acquaintance with the girl's parents, when he had offered to act as intermediary and expressed the fondest hopes, the mournful and troubled spirit of the prisoner revived, he felt he was free again, reconciled with his parents-in-law—and the conversation moved on to considerations of what they should live on and where.

"But that should not be a problem for you," said Wilhelm, "for you both seem by nature well equipped to achieve success in the profession you have chosen. A good figure, a melodious voice, a heart full of feeling—what more do actors need? If I could help you with some introductions, I would be very happy to do so."

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart," said Melina, "but I could hardly make use of them, because I shall most likely not return to the theater."

"That would be a great mistake," said Wilhelm, after a pause to recover from his surprise, for he had assumed that, once freed with his young wife, the actor would resume his work in the theater. This seemed to him as natural and necessary as water to a frog. He had not doubted this for a moment, and so was astonished to find that he was mistaken.

"No, I do not intend to return to acting," said the young man. "I would rather find some occupation like other townsfolk have, whatever it may be—if only I can find it." "I cannot say I approve of such a strange decision," said Wilhelm. "For it is never a good idea to change the life one has chosen, except for a

really good reason. Also I cannot think of any profession that is as attractive and offers such agreeable prospects as that of an actor." "That shows that you have never been one yourself," said Melina; to which Wilhelm replied: "But sir—rarely is a man satisfied with the conditions in which he finds himself! He is always wishing he had those of his neighbor, and the neighbor is equally eager to change his." "But there is a difference between bad and worse," said Melina. "It is experience, not impatience, that makes me decide as I have. Is there any livelihood in the whole world more meager, insecure and tedious? One might just as well be a beggar in the street. What one has to put up with from the jealousy of colleagues, the favoritism of managers, and the fickleness of the public! You have to be really thick-skinned, like a bear on a chain, beaten with a stick in the company of dogs and apes, to dance to the bagpipes before children and riff-raff."

Wilhelm was having all sorts of thoughts that he did not dare voice to this worthy fellow. What he did say had a certain detachment about it, whereas Melina talked more and more volubly and openly. "Shouldn't every theater manager beseech the town council to allow more money to circulate for four weeks during the annual trade fair? I have often felt sorry for our manager, for he is quite a good fellow, even though at times he has given me cause for dissatisfaction. A good actor profits him, but the bad ones he can't get rid of, and if he tries to make his takes more or less keep pace with his expenses, that's too much for the public, the theater is empty and, so as not to fold entirely, we have to play at a loss. No, sir, if, as you say, you want to take our part, then I beg you to talk seriously to her parents and get them to provide for us here and find me some small job as a copyist or tax collector. Then I shall feel happy."

After some further exchange between them Wilhelm went off, with the promise that he would go to her parents early next day and see what he could do. Once he was alone, he vented his feelings in a series of exclamatory outbursts: "O, unhappy Melina, the misery that oppresses you, lies not in your profession but in yourself! What man in the whole world would not find his situation intolerable if he chooses a craft, an art, indeed any form of life, without experiencing an inner calling? Whoever is born with a talent, or to a talent, must surely find in that the most pleasing of occupations! Everything on this earth has its difficult sides! Only some inner drive—pleasure—love—can help us overcome obstacles, prepare a path, and lift us out of the narrow circle in which others tread out their anguished, miserable existences! The stage is for you, Melina, just a set of boards, and your roles are nothing more than school assignments! You view the spectators as they see themselves—part of the daily grind! It would be just the same for you if you were sitting over ledgers at a desk, recording interest payments and worming our arrears from people. You never feel that sense of a conglomerate, inflammable whole that can only be created, comprehended and executed by the mind. You have never felt that there is a brighter spark in man which, if it receives no nourishment, if it is

not allowed to ignite, becomes covered ever more deeply by the ashes of daily needs and indifference, and yet is never entirely extinguished—or only very late. You don't feel any strength within you to ignite it, no riches in your heart to give it sustenance. You are driven by hunger, inconveniences upset you, and you are quite unaware that such adversaries lurk in every human soul, no matter what it is engaged in, and that only by joyfulness of spirit and evenness of purpose can they be vanquished. You do well to long for the limitations of some vulgar occupation, for how could you fulfil the obligations of one that demands courage and spirit! Transfer your sentiments to any soldier, any statesman, any priest, and he too would complain with equal justification about the miseries of his station. Have there not been men, so deprived of any feeling for life, that they considered all human life worthless, a pitiable existence of dust? If the examples of active men were always present to your mind, if your bosom were inflamed by a desire to participate, if your whole being were enveloped in some feeling that came from your inmost self, if the sounds of your voice, the words of your mouth were pleasing to listen to, if you felt that strength of self, you would surely look for places and opportunities where you might feel your own strength in other people."

With such fine words and thoughts our hero undressed and went to bed with a feeling of inmost satisfaction. In his mind a whole romance began to develop around what he would do next day in the place of this unworthy fellow. Pleasant fantasies led him to sleep and delivered him up to dreams which received him with open arms and surrounded him with images of heaven.

Next morning he awoke and began thinking of the business at hand. He returned to the house of the girl's parents, who received him with some surprise. In a few simple words he told them what he had to propose, and encountered both more and less opposition than he had expected. For what had happened, had happened; and although people with firm and strict opinions usually tend to voice vigorous disapproval of what has already irrevocably taken place, and thereby increase their misfortune, the fact that it *has* already happened works on them irresistibly and what had seemed unthinkable has become part of their everyday experience. It was therefore soon settled that Melina should marry their daughter, but that, because of her behavior, she should receive no dowry, and leave the inheritance she had from an aunt in her father's hands for a few years, receiving only a modest interest from it. This second point—the matter of financial provision for her—encountered considerable difficulties. For they did not wish to set eyes on their errant child, nor materially advance this union of a vagrant with a member of a highly respectable family (which even counted a Superintendent among its members), and as for an official position for the husband—there was little prospect of that. Both parents were vigorously opposed to it, and though Wilhelm spoke strongly in favor of the idea (because he agreed that this man, of whom he had no high opinion, was not worthy to return to the delights of the stage), he could not, despite all his arguments, move them in his direction. If he had only

known their true motives he would not even have tried to persuade them. The father wanted to keep his daughter at home, and hated the young man because his own wife had cast a favorable eye on him, and that meant that she would never have welcomed a rival in her stepdaughter. And so Melina was obliged to leave in a few days with his young bride (who wanted more than he to see the world and be seen by it) in order to find a position in some other theatrical company.

Chapter Fifteen

Happy youth, happy those first gropings for love, when we converse readily with ourselves, delighting in echoes of our own conversation and satisfied when our invisible partner merely repeats the last syllables of what we have just uttered!

Wilhelm was in this state during the first days of his love for Mariane—and even more so later, when he began to shower her with all the wealth of his feelings and to regard himself as a beggar living from what she gave him in return. And as a landscape is always, or indeed only, pleasing when the sun shines upon it, so everything that surrounded her, everything she touched, was beautified and glorified by her presence.

He would often stand in the wings, once he had been allowed this privilege by the manager, and although the illusion disappeared from this perspective, the far greater magic of love began to operate. He would stand for hours alongside the grubby cart on which the lights were fixed, breathing in the smell of tallow, and looking to see his beloved who, when she finally came on stage, would gaze at him lovingly and transport him into a realm of bliss amidst the skeletal framework of slats and crossbeams. The stuffed lambkins, glittering cloth waterfalls, cardboard rosebushes and thatched cottages with only one side to them aroused in him pleasing poetic images of a distant pastoral world. Even the dancers, so ugly at close quarters, did not displease him, for they were on one and the same stage with his dearly beloved. The love needed to bring life to rosebushes, myrtle groves and moonlight can certainly also endow woodchips and paper snippers with a degree of real live existence. Such seasoning is so potent that it can give flavor to the blandest or most distasteful concoction.

Some such seasoning was needed to make the usual state of Mariane's dressing room, and even sometimes her own appearance, palatable to him. For he had been brought up in a superior middle-class household, where cleanliness and order were the very air he breathed; and since he had inherited something of his father's love of finery, he had, even as a boy, arranged his room like a small kingdom. The curtains of his bed were gathered in folds and fastened with tassels, the way one imagines thrones to be. He had put a rug in the middle of the room, and a coverlet, of finer quality, on his table, with his books

and other objects arranged on it, so meticulously that a Dutch painter could have made a still life from them. A white cap would be fastened on his head like a turban, and he turned up the sleeves of his dressing gown in oriental fashion, asserting that the long sleeves got in his way when he was writing. Of an evening, when he was alone and without fear of being disturbed, he would girdle himself with a silk sash, and sometimes stick a dagger in, which he had got from some old junk room, and, thus accoutred, rehearse the tragic roles that he had assigned to himself. He even knelt on the carpet to say his prayers.

How fortunate, he used to think, were actors in former days, when—so he imagined—they had magnificent costumes, suits of armor and weapons and always presented a model of noble behavior, their minds reflecting the noblest and best in attitudes, sentiments, and emotions. He pictured the domestic life of such an actor as a sequence of worthy actions and occupations of which his appearances in the theater were the climax—like silver, long treated in the refiner's fire and then finally emerging, free of all base elements, in all its resplendent brilliance.

How startled he was when, emerging from such a haze of beautiful fancies, he first looked at the chairs and tables in his beloved idol's dressing room! The remains of some momentary false adornment lay scattered around in complete disorder, like the glittering coat of a descaled fish. The instruments of human hygiene, such as combs, soap and washcloths, were there for anyone to see. Music, shoes, dirty laundry, artificial flowers, little boxes, hairpins, makeup jars, ribbons, books and straw hats lay in unabashed proximity to each other, covered with a uniform layer of powder and dust. But since Wilhelm, when he was in her presence, noticed little but her and even everything associated with her, everything she touched, was necessarily dear to him, he discovered a certain charm in this household of disorder such as he had never experienced in the splendor of his own room. When he removed her corset to get to the piano, or put her petticoats on the bed so that he could have a place to sit, or when she did not put away certain objects that she would normally have concealed from others out of a sense of decorum but had no scruples at leaving around when he was there, he felt that he was drawing closer to her all the time and invisible bonds were strengthening their union.

It was not so easy for him to relate to his idealized concept of their calling the behavior of the other actors that he sometimes met when he called on her the first few times. Busy at idling, they never seemed to be concerned about their profession and calling. He never heard them discussing the poetic merit of a play or criticizing it (rightly or wrongly). All they talked about was: "How much will it make? Will it be a hit? How long will it run? How many performances will we give? . . ." and such like. Then they usually went on to attack the manager: that he was too stingy with salaries, and unjust to one or the other of them; that the public seldom applauded the right man, that the German theater was getting better every day, that the actors were more and more appreciated for their merits and should be more respected. There was a lot of

talk about coffeehouses and wine restaurants, and what had happened there, how much one of them was in debt, how much his salary had been docked, the inadequacy of their weekly wages, and the intrigues of one group against the other. Finally there was some consideration given to the importance of having an attentive audience; and the influence of the theater on the cultural level of the nation, indeed of the world, was not overlooked.

All these matters, which had caused Wilhelm much uneasiness, returned vividly to his mind as his horse carried him slowly toward home and he reflected on the various events he had witnessed. He had observed at first hand the disturbance that the flight of one girl had created in a good middle-class family and indeed a whole town. He recalled those scenes on the road and in the courthouse, the opinions expressed by Melina, and all that had resulted filled his mind, always eager to press on, with such uneasiness that he spurred on his horse and hurried toward the town.

But in so doing he ran into new unpleasantness. For Werner, his friend and presumptive brother-in-law, was waiting to have a serious and unexpected talk with him.

Werner was one of those who, having settled into a particular mode of existence, are usually taken to be cold, because they never flare up quickly or visibly. His relationship with Wilhelm was one of continual conflict, which, however, brought them ever closer together, for despite their different attitudes, each of them profited from the other. Werner gave himself credit for being able to restrain in some degree Wilhelm's lively, but occasionally over-enthusiastic, spirit, and Wilhelm, for his part, had a sense of real triumph when in the heat of his emotion he was able to carry his sober-minded friend with him. The one tried himself out on the other, they saw each other almost every day, and one could have said that their desire to discover each other through their conversations was only increased by the impossibility of making themselves mutually understood. Basically, however, they were both good men, and both working towards one and the same goal, separately and together, and yet never able to understand why the one could not reduce the other to his way of thinking.

Werner had been aware for some time that Wilhelm's visits were becoming less frequent, that he was curt and inattentive when he got on to his favorite topics, and that he no longer plunged so intensely into the active elaboration of unusual ideas; it seemed to Werner that Wilhelm, in his own mind, was seeking peace and contentment in the presence of his friend. Werner, cautious and careful by disposition, assumed at first that the fault was his, until some town gossip gave him the clue, and certain indiscretions of Wilhelm's confirmed his suspicions. He started to investigate and soon found out that some time ago Wilhelm had been visiting an actress, had spoken with her at the theater and even taken her home. He would have been desolate if he had known about the nocturnal meetings, for he heard that Mariane was a seductive girl who was probably after his friend's money, and in addition to that, was kept by a worthless lover.

Having satisfied himself as far as possible of the truth of his suspicions, he decided to make an assault on Wilhelm, and was fully prepared for this, when Wilhelm returned in a bad humor from his journey.

On that very evening Werner told him all he knew, quite calmly at first but then with all the intense earnestness of a well-meaning friend, leaving nothing imprecise and making him taste to the full all the bitterness that calm people in their vindictive virtuousness lavish on passionate lovers. But as might be expected, he achieved little. Wilhelm responded with irritation but quite firmly: "You don't know the girl. Appearances may be against her, but I am as sure of her loyalty and virtue as I am of my own love."

Werner, however, persisted in his accusations and offered to provide evidence and witnesses. But Wilhelm rejected all this and left his friend in a disturbed and vexed frame of mind, like someone having a defective but firmly rooted tooth grasped by a clumsy dentist, who vainly tries to dislodge it.

Wilhelm was ill at ease to find his shining image of Mariane becoming tarnished and almost distorted by the vagaries of his journey and Werner's unkind words. So he decided on the best means of restoring it to its pristine clarity and beauty—and hastened that very night to go and see her by the usual route. She greeted him cheerfully and eagerly. She had earlier the day seen him ride by, and so was waiting for him at night. One can well imagine that all his doubts were soon dispelled, for her tenderness restored his confidence in her, and he told her how other people, including his friend Werner, had been maligning her.

Many a lively conversation led them back to the beginning of their relationship, the memory of which always remains a favorite subject for lovers. The first steps into the maze of love are always so delightful, our first prospects so bewitching that we always like to recall them. And each of the two claims precedence over the other, each claims to have been the first in his or her unselfish affection, and each would rather be proved wrong than the opposite.

Wilhelm told Mariane once again what she had heard so often, namely that she had soon distracted his attention from the play so that he was entirely taken up with her, and had been captivated by her figure, her acting, her voice, and finally only went to the plays that she was performing in, and even crept onto the stage and stood alongside her without her noticing. And he remembered that blissfully happy evening when he had the occasion to do her some small service and thereby start a conversation. Mariane for her part would not agree that it was so long before she noticed him. She had often seen him out walking, she said, and could describe the clothes he was wearing that day, for even at that time she had liked him better than all the rest, and she had wanted to make his acquaintance.

How pleased Wilhelm was to believe all this, pleased to be persuaded that she had come to him as he to her, both led by some irresistible force to each other—that she had purposely come up beside him in the wings, so that she might look at him from close by and get to know him, and that finally,

since his shyness and reserve seemed impossible to overcome, she herself had given him the opening by almost forcing him to bring her a glass of lemonade.

Time passed quickly in this lovers' competition, for they followed through every moment in the course of their short romance, and Wilhelm left her with his mind completely at peace, and the firm determination to put his plan into action immediately.

Chapter Sixteen

Wilhelm's parents had got together everything that he would need for his journey, but there were still a few items lacking, and that delayed his departure for several days. He used the time to write a letter to Mariane in order to bring out into the open the matter that she had always avoided discussing. This is how the letter ran:

"Wrapped in the beloved cloak of night, which usually covers me in your arms, I sit and think and write to you. And what I think and what I do is all for you. O Mariane, I am the happiest of men, and feel like a bridegroom who senses a whole new world opening up for him and through him when he stands on the festive carpet and is transported during the sacred ceremony in lustful thoughts towards those dark curtains of mystery behind which the joys of love enticingly rustle. I have steeled myself to not seeing you for a few days. This was not so difficult because I am hoping to make up for this loss by being with you always, by being all yours. Must I tell you once more what I desire? I feel that I must; for it seems that so far you have not understood me.

"How often have I, with a few words of loving trust, fearing to lose what I have by saying more, ventured to question your feelings about a lasting union between us. You must have understood me, for in your heart the same wish must have grown, you heard me in every kiss, in the nestling peace of all our happy evenings together. I have got to know your modesty, and this has but increased my love for you. Whereas any other girl would have used every artifice and by spreading excessive sunshine to bring to fruition a decision in her lover's heart, elicited a declaration that would harden into a promise, you have always withdrawn, closed the half-bared breast of your beloved and tried by seeming indifference to conceal your approval. But I understand – and what a miserable creature I would be if I did not recognize in these signs the purity of your unselfish love, your concern for your dear friend! Trust me and do not be anxious! We belong together and neither of us will forgo anything when we live for each other.

"Take my hand, take it solemnly as a further sign of my love. We have tasted all the joys of love but new blessings are in store for us once we decide on a lasting relationship. Don't ask how, and don't worry. Fate takes care of love, and all the more so, since love is its own reward.

"In my mind I have long left my parents' home, in order to be in spirit with you on the stage. O, my beloved, was ever a man so fortunate in combining his desires as I? My eyes are closed in sleep, for your love and your happiness keep appearing before me, the dawn of a new life.

"I can hardly stop myself from rushing to you and wresting from you your approval, and then off next morning early into the wide world to work towards the goal I have in mind. But I must control myself, I should not rush foolhardily and impatiently, for I have thought out a plan of action and must pursue it circumspectly.

"I am acquainted with a theater manager named Serlo, and will go straight to him. About a year ago he urged his people to develop my enthusiasm for the theater and wished they had something of the same. He will certainly be glad to see me. I would not like to join your company, for various reasons. And Serlo's company is playing at such a distance from here that I can initially conceal this step. I'll find somewhere decent to stay, look around at what the audiences are like, get to know the actors—and then send for you to join me there.

"You see, Mariane, how I can conquer my desire in order to get you for sure. For not to see you a long time, knowing you are somewhere or other out there in the world, that I do not dare to think about! But then when I think of your love—that will sustain me, if you meet my request and, before we part, give me your hand before the priest, I will go in peace. It will only be a formality for us, but a lovely one, to have the blessing of Heaven as well as that of the earth. It can be done quite quietly and secretly here in the neighborhood, I have enough money to start with. We can divide it up, there will be sufficient for us both. And when that is used up, Heaven will provide.

"You see, my dear, I am not at all worried. What started so joyfully, must end happily, I have never had any doubts that one can make one's way in the world, so long as one is serious. And I am determined enough to find ample support for two, even for more. 'The world is ungrateful,' people say, but I have never found it so, if one knows what to do for the world, and how my whole soul is aglow with the thought of at last being on the stage and telling men's hearts what they have long been yearning to hear. Convinced as I am of the glory of the stage, I have many times been distressed watching wretched actors imagining that they could speak noble words to our eager hearts, whereas what they produce is worse than a squeaky falsetto, and a coarse clumsiness that is beneath contempt.

"The theater has often found itself in conflict with the church, but this should not be so. How desirable it would be if both would glorify God and Nature through the mouths of noble human beings. These are not dreams, Mariane! I have felt your heart and know that you are in love. Likewise I believe in my brilliant idea, and say—better perhaps not say, but hope—that someday we will appear together, a pair of noble spirits, opening up the hearts of men, touching their souls, and offering them heavenly delights. I believe

this because the joys of being with you were always heavenly delights, because we were lifted beyond ourselves, and felt above ourselves.

"I can't finish. I have already said too much, and yet do not know if I told you all that you should know. For no words are adequate to express the movement of the wheel that turns within my heart.

"Yet keep this letter, my dear. I have read it again and feel I should start once more at the beginning. But it does contain everything that you should know, to prepare you for my joyful return to your loving breast. I feel like a prisoner in his cell, listening as he files off his shackles. I bid my blissfully sleeping parents goodnight!—Farewell, my beloved, farewell. I will stop now. My eyes have already closed two or three times. For it is very late at night."

Chapter Seventeen

The day would not end when Wilhelm, his letter nicely folded in his pocket, longed to be with Mariane. Although it was hardly dark, he made his way to her lodging, with the idea of announcing his return at nightfall and leaving the letter in her hands before he absented himself for a while, intending to return at night to get her answer, receive her approval or, if need be, force it from her by the passion of his caresses. He flew into her arms and could hardly control himself as he clasped her to him. The intensity of his feelings was such that he did not at first notice that she failed to respond as warmly as usual. But she could not conceal her anxiety for long, claiming she was not feeling well, had a headache and did not welcome his coming back that night. He did not suspect anything, and did not press her, but felt this was not the right moment to give her the letter. So he kept it in his pocket, and since several words and gestures of hers politely indicated to him that she wished him to leave, he grabbed one of her scarves in the heat of his unsatisfied emotion, stuck it in his pocket, unwillingly tore himself away from her lips and left her. He walked slowly home, but could not stay there for more than a short while. He changed his clothes and went out again to get some fresh air.

He walked around the streets, and then a stranger approached him and asked him the way to a certain inn. Wilhelm offered to take him there. The stranger asked the name of the street, and those of the owners of several large houses that they passed, enquired after certain local police regulations, and by the time they reached the door of the inn the two men found themselves involved in a very interesting conversation. The stranger persuaded his guide to step inside and have a glass of punch with him. He told Wilhelm his name and place of birth, and the nature of the business that had brought him here, urging Wilhelm to be equally communicative. So Wilhelm began by telling him his name and where he lived.

"Aren't you a grandson of old Meister who had such a fine art collection?" the stranger asked. "Yes, I am," said Wilhelm. "But my grandfather died when

I was ten, and I was very grieved to see those lovely things sold." "But your father got a great sum of money for them." "How do you know that?" "Oh, I saw those treasures when they were still in your house. Your grandfather was not just a collector, he knew a great deal about art. He had been in Italy in earlier and happier times, and brought back with him treasures such as could now not be bought at any price. He possessed marvelous paintings by the best artists, and you could hardly believe your eyes when you looked through his collection of drawings. He had various priceless fragments of sculpture and an instructive array of bronzes. His coins were collected with regard to art as well as history, his precious stones, few though they were, were of the highest quality. And everything was well arranged, even though the rooms in the old house were not designed symmetrically."

"Then you can imagine what a loss we children felt when all these things were taken down and packed," said Wilhelm. "Those were the first sad days of my life. I remember how empty the rooms seemed, as we watched one thing after the other disappear, things that we had enjoyed since childhood, things which had seemed to us as permanent as the house itself or the town we lived in."

"If I am not mistaken," said the stranger, "your father invested the proceeds in a neighbor's business and formed a sort of company with him?"

"Right! And their business has worked out very well. In those twelve years they have substantially increased their capital and both are all the more concerned now with increasing it even further. And old Werner has a son who is much better suited to this sort of thing than I am."

"I am sorry that this town should have lost such a treasure as your grandfather's collection. I saw it shortly before it was sold, and I can honestly say that I was the instigator of the sale. A rich nobleman and great connoisseur, who, however, did not trust his own judgment in so large a deal, sent me here so that I might give him my advice. I examined the collection for six whole days, and on the seventh I advised my friend to pay the asking price without questioning it. I remember you then as a bright boy, always at my side, telling me what the paintings were about and making quite good comments on the collection."

"I remember such a person being there, but I wouldn't have recognized you."

"Well, it was quite a while ago and we all change to some degree. I seem to remember that you had a favorite picture from which you were unwilling to let me move on."

"Yes, indeed. It was the picture of a sick prince consumed by passion for his father's bride."

"It wasn't exactly the best painting in the collection: the composition was not good, the colors were nothing special, and the execution was mannered."

"I didn't understand that, and still don't understand it: The subject is what appeals to me in a painting, not the artistry."

"Your grandfather seemed to think otherwise, for the major part of his collection consisted of excellent things in which one always admired the merits

of the painter without reference to the subject. And that particular picture was hanging in an anteroom to show that he did not value it highly."

"That was where we children were allowed to play," said Wilhelm, "and where that particular picture made such an indelible impression on me which not even your criticism (which, on the whole, I have great respect for) could obliterate if we were standing before it now. How distressed I was—and still am—that a young man should have to keep bottled up in himself those sweet feelings, the best that Nature gives him, and must hide those fires which should warm him and others, so that his soul is consumed with pain and suffering! And how I pity an unhappy woman being joined to someone other than the one her heart felt worthy of her true, pure love!"

"Such emotion is certainly far removed from the way an art lover looks at the work of great artists. But if the paintings had remained in your home, you would probably have developed more understanding for the works themselves, instead of always putting yourself and your feelings into them."

"I always regretted the sale of the pictures and missed them often even when I was older. But when I consider that it was necessary, so to speak, in order that I myself could develop a passion, and talent, of my own which will affect my life more than all those dead pictures ever did, then I accept the fact and respect it as a stroke of fate which opened up the best in me, as it does in others."

"I am sorry to hear the word 'fate' used once again by a young man at a time in his life when passionate inclinations are all too often interpreted as the workings of higher forces," said the stranger.

"But don't you believe in fate, some power which rules over us and guides everything to our advantage?" Wilhelm asked.

"It is not a matter of believing, or trying to make sense out of what is otherwise incomprehensible, but simply of deciding which way of looking at things suits us best. The texture of this world is made up of necessity and chance. Human reason holds the balance between them, treating necessity as the basis of existence, but manipulating and directing chance, and using it. Only if our reason is unshakeable, does man deserve to be called a god of the earth. Woe to him who, from youth on, is prone to find arbitrariness in necessity and ascribes a certain reasonableness to chance and accepts this religiously. For that amounts to denying one's rational self and giving free play to one's feelings. We think we are god-fearing people if we saunter through life without much thought, we let ourselves be carried along by happy chance, and then finally declare that our wavering existence was a life governed by divine guidance."

"But have you never experienced a situation where some small circumstance made you take a certain path on which a favorable opportunity soon presented itself to you, and a whole series of unexpected occurrences brought you to a goal you had yourself hardly envisioned? Shouldn't that encourage you to trust in fate and its guidance?"

“With such opinions no girl would keep her virtue and no man his money, for there are enough opportunities to lose them both. But I can be really happy only with a person who knows what is useful to him and others, and works at controlling his own arbitrariness. Everyone holds his fortune in his own hands, like a sculptor the raw material he will fashion into a figure. But it’s the same with that type of artistic activity as with all others. Only the ability to do it, only the capability, is inborn in us, it must be learned and attentively cultivated.”

They went on discussing this and many other things, and finally parted, without seeming to have convinced each other, but they agreed on a place to meet again next day.

Wilhelm walked up and down the streets. He heard clarinets, horns and bassoons and was delighted at their sound. Some travelling musicians were giving a pleasant serenade. He spoke with them and paid them to follow him to where Mariane lived. He positioned the singers under the tall trees before the house, lay down on a bench some distance away and abandoned himself entirely to the soaring sounds that floated around him in the soothing night. Stretched out beneath the beauty of the stars he felt that his whole existence was one golden dream. “She can hear these melodies,” he said to himself. “She will know in her heart whose thoughts and sounds of love are resounding through the night. Even at a distance we are bound together by such music with all its delicate sounds. For two loving hearts are like a pair of magnetic compasses: when the one moves, the other moves with it, for only one thing is at work, one force permeates them both. When I am in her arms, how can I possibly imagine being separated from her? And yet I will be far from her, seeking a sanctuary for our love, and she will therefore always be with me.

“How often has it happened that, being away from her, or lost in thoughts of her, I touched a book or some garment, and thought it was her hand I felt, so absorbed was I in her presence, and remembered those precious moments which shunned the light of day as if it were some icy interloper, those moments to enjoy which gods would gladly abandon their state of bliss. But how can one talk of remembering—as if one could ever relive that frenzied intoxication which enslaves with heavenly bonds all our senses—and her figure. . . .” He lost himself in thoughts of her, thoughts that soon changed to desire, embraced a tree, cooled his cheek on the bark, and breathed out his excitement into the night air that was all too ready to receive it. He tried to find the scarf that he had taken from her room, but he had left it in his other suit. His lips were burning and his limbs quivering with desire.

The music stopped, and he felt as if he had fallen down from the heights scaled by his soaring emotions. His restlessness increased, now that his feelings were no longer being nourished and tempered by the sweetness of the music. He sat down on the steps of her house and became somewhat calmer. He kissed the ring on the brass knocker, kissed the threshold of the door she went in and out of, warming it at the fire in his heart. Then he sat still for a

a while, thinking of her up there behind the curtains, sleeping in her white nightgown with the red ribbon round her head, and imagined himself so close to her as to make her dream of him. His thoughts were as lovely as twilight spirits, sometimes peaceful and sometimes eager. Love's quivering hand passed over every string in his soul. He felt as if the music of the spheres had halted to listen to the melodies of his heart.

If he had had the key on him which usually let him into her house, he would not have hesitated to enter the temple of love. But since he had not, he slowly and dreamily sauntered along beneath the trees, in the direction of his own home but always turning back, until finally he reached the corner and, looking once more, thought he saw Mariane's door open and a dark figure emerge. He was too far away to see clearly, but by the time he collected himself and looked, the shadow was lost in the night, though he thought he could perceive it far off against a white wall. He stood and blinked, and before he could pull himself together and hurry after it, the figure had disappeared. Where should he look? What street had swallowed up that person, if it was a person?

His eyes and his emotions were confused like those of a man unable to find his way again when he has just been blinded by the sudden illumination of an area nearby. And like a ghost at midnight that scares the wits out of us, and when we regain our composure seems the product of our own anxiety and leaves us with doubts whether in fact we ever saw it, a great uneasiness came over Wilhelm as he stood leaning against the corner of a wall, unaware that day was breaking and the cocks were crowing. Tradesmen began to go about their morning rounds, and that drove him home.

By the time he got back he had more or less found reasons to dismiss the surprising phantom from his mind; but all the beauty of the night, which now seemed equally unreal, was gone as well. And so to assuage his heart and put a seal on his returning faith in his beloved, he took out her scarf from the pocket of the suit he had been wearing earlier. As he raised it to his lips a piece of paper fell out. He picked it up, and read: "Well, my little rogue and loved one, what was the matter with you yesterday? I'll come tonight. I can well understand that you will be sorry to leave here. But be patient, I'll follow you to the fair. And listen, don't wear that black, green and brown jacket. It makes you look like the Witch of Endor. Didn't I send you that white negligé, so that I could hold a white lamb in my arms? Always send me your messages by the old harridan, for she's the devil's own messenger."

Book Two

Chapter One

Anyone whom we observe striving with all his powers to attain some goal, can be assured of our sympathy, whether we approve of the goal or not. But once the matter is decided, we turn our attention elsewhere, for when something is completed or resolved our concern with it diminishes, especially if we have, from the start, foreseen an unsatisfactory outcome. So we will not treat our readers to a detailed account of the woes and sorrows of our unfortunate friend when he saw his hopes and desires so unexpectedly shattered, but rather jump over a few years and join him again where we shall hope to find him more pleasurably occupied. But before that we must fill in with what is necessary for our story to make sense.

Plague and high fever take a firmer and quicker hold on healthy and vigorous persons than on others, and Wilhelm had been so unexpectedly struck down by misfortune that his whole being was instantaneously disorganized. When a firework catches light unexpectedly and all those carefully shaped and filled rockets, which were intended to eject balls of colored fire in predetermined succession, suddenly start hissing and crackling, ominously and without any pretense of order, this was not unlike the tumult of disorder into which all his hopes and joys, all his dreams and realities collapsed. In such moments of utter desolation the friend who hastens to help, stands petrified, and the person affected is fortunate if his sensitivities are numbed.

Days of repeated, and constantly revived, pain followed, days when nature was working beneficially in Wilhelm. For during this time he had not yet lost his beloved entirely, and his sorrow was a series of insisently renewed attempts to hold on to the happiness that had left him, recapture it in his imagination and prolong for a little while those joys that had gone forever. A body is not entirely dead while the process of decay is still underway and its various powers are working themselves off by systematically destroying those members that they normally activate. Only when everything has worn away everything else and reduced the whole to indifferent dust, only then are we invaded by that wretched sense of emptiness that we call death, a state that can only be quickened by the breath of eternal life.

There was so much to disrupt, to destroy, to kill off in this young, loving spirit, that the healing powers of youth merely stoked the fires of sorrow. What had happened, had struck at the roots of his whole existence. Werner, of necessity the only person that Wilhelm could confide in, did all he could to pour fire and flame onto this hateful passion, the dragon in his entrails. The occasion was so apposite, the evidence was so everpresent, that he made use of everything he had heard in the way of rumors and stories. He did this so systematically and with such vehemence and savagery that he did not leave his friend one consoling moment of illusion, one escape hatch from his despair. And so nature, determined not to lose a favorite son, afflicted him with sickness, so that he had, in his own way, time to breathe.

A raging fever, and what followed—medication, overexcitement and lassitude, ministrations from the family, affection from his acquaintances that showed itself only now that he really needed it—these were distractions in changed circumstances and meager occupations for his mind. When he felt better—that is to say when all his energies were exhausted—he gazed in horror down into the empty abyss of torment and misery that opened up before him, barren like the burnt-out hollow crater of a volcano.

He now began to reproach himself bitterly when, having lost so much, he could enjoy a moment of calm, painless reflection. He despised his very heart, and longed again for the refreshment of tears and misery. To restore this he would persistently recall every moment, every scene of his past happiness. He recreated them in the brightest colors, thought himself back into them, and when he had worked himself up to the point where the sunshine of past days was beginning to warm his body and spirit, he would look back at the ghastly abyss, feast his eyes on the dizzying depths, and then hurl himself into them and exact from nature all the torments of bitter pain. And so he tore himself to pieces in repeated accesses of savagery, for youth, so rich in hidden powers, never knows what it is robbing itself of when it joins trumped-up sorrows to the pain of a real loss, as if this were necessary to impart real significance to the pain of what has been foregone. Also, he was so convinced that this would be the only loss, the first and the last, that he would ever experience, that he despised any consolation that might suggest such sorrow as his could not last forever.

Chapter Two

Accustomed as he was to torment himself in this way, he began also to pour savage criticism onto what, apart from his love, had been his greatest hope and joy—his abilities as a poet and an actor. His own compositions now seemed to him mere sterile imitations of conventional models, with no life of their own—school exercises, totally devoid of any trace of reality, truth or inspiration. His poems were rhythmically monotonous, held together by wretched

rhymes, with commonplace thoughts and feelings ponderously expressed. There was no longer any pleasure or expectation of recovery for him from this quarter. Nor was there from his acting talent. He reproached himself for not having understood earlier that vanity was at the bottom of that, and nothing more. He reconsidered his figure, his movements, his gestures and declamation, and decided that they had no particular merit or distinction, were nothing above the ordinary. This merely increased his silent desperation. Hard as it is to abandon one's love of a woman, it is equally painful to desert the company of the muses because one feels unworthy of their company, and to forego those delightful rounds of applause at one's person, one's demeanor and one's voice.

And so our friend resigned himself fully to active participation in the world of business. To the astonishment of Werner and to the great delight of his father, no one was more industrious than Wilhelm in the countinghouse, on the exchange, in the office or the warehouse. He dealt with correspondence and bills and everything else assigned to him with the greatest efficiency. Not indeed with that joyful eagerness which is its own reward when one executes in an orderly fashion what one is born to do, but with a certain quiet sense of duty, based on solid foundations and sustained by conviction, self-rewarding on the whole. But sometimes he was unable to suppress a sigh even when his best qualities were being engaged.

Wilhelm went on living in this way for quite a time, industrious and convinced that the hard school of fate was working to his advantage. He was glad to see that he had been warned in time, though rather unpleasantly, and that others would not later have to pay heavily for the errors of his youthful self-satisfaction. For usually a man resists, as long as he can, having to admit that he is a fool at heart, that he has made a big mistake. Men are unwilling to admit a truth that may drive them to despair.

Determined as he was to give up his dearest aspirations, it took some time for him to be convinced of his misfortune. But finally he had so completely eradicated, and with convincing arguments, every hope of love, of poetic creativity and acting in himself, that he found the necessary courage to wipe out every trace of his former folly, everything that might possibly remind him of it. One chilly evening he lit a fire and got out a box of keepsakes, in which there were all sorts of things he had received or snatched from Mariane in certain memorable moments. There were dried flowers to remind him of the time when they were fresh in her hair, little notes inviting him to hours of bliss, ribbons from her lovely bosom where he had rested his heart. Did not these souvenirs serve to renew every feeling he had thought dead, revive every passion that he thought he had mastered, now that he was separated from her? For we never notice how sad and unpleasant a gloomy day is, until a ray of sunshine suddenly breaks through and presents the brightening gleam of a joyful hour.

He was not unmoved as he watched these treasures go up in smoke that he had preserved for so long. Once or twice he hesitated, and he still had a string

of beads and a flowered scarf left when he decided to stoke the fire with the poetic efforts of his youth. Up to now he had carefully preserved everything that had flowed from his pen since his mind began to develop. His writings were tied up in bundles which he had packed in the trunk he had hoped to take with him on his journey. How different was his frame of mind now as he opened them from when he had bundled them together.

When we open a letter that we once wrote and sealed on a particular occasion but which never reached the friend it was sent to, and was returned to us, we have a strange feeling as we break the seal, our own seal, and converse with our different self as with a third person. Just such a feeling it was that gripped our hero as he opened the first packet and threw the various sheets into the fire, which burned up brightly. At this moment Werner came into the room, was surprised at the blazing fire and asked Wilhelm what he was up to.

"I'm giving you a proof," said Wilhelm, "that I'm serious about abandoning an occupation I wasn't born to," and with these words he threw the second package into the flames. Werner tried to prevent him, but he was too late.

"I don't see why you should go to such extremes," he said. "Why should these pieces of work, imperfect though they may be, be completely destroyed?"

"Because a poem should either be perfect or not exist at all. Anyone without the ability to produce the very best, should not engage in artistic activity and should resist any temptation to do so. Of course there is a vague longing in all of us to imitate what we see, but that does not prove that one has the power to achieve what one aims at. Look how boys who have seen acrobats performing, walk up and down trying to balance on planks and beams till some other pastime attracts them. Haven't you seen that amongst our own friends? When we hear a virtuoso performer, there are always some of us who start learning the instrument. And how many falter on the way! Happy he who realizes early enough that desire is no indication of ability!"

Werner didn't agree. The conversation became heated, and Wilhelm found himself using against his friend the same passionate arguments that he had been tormenting himself with. Werner insisted that it was ridiculous to abandon a talent he had exercised with pleasure and some skill, simply because he would never achieve perfection through it. There were always those dull hours that could be filled up in this way, and something would gradually emerge that would give pleasure to us and to others.

Our hero, whose opinion was quite different, cut in and exclaimed vehemently: "How wrong you are, my friend, in thinking that a work, the first concept of which must fill one's whole soul, can possibly be produced in odd spots of snatched time. Oh no, a poet must live *entirely* for himself and in his beloved subjects! Endowed by heaven with a fund of inner riches, he must labor to increase this by living, happy and undisturbed, with his own treasure. No man can acquire such happiness by the mere amassing of riches. Just look at how men rush after fortune and pleasure, driven on restlessly by money, effort and desire, but to what end? To the same state that the poet has received by nature:

to enjoyment of the world, the sense of being a part of a community, harmonious coexistence with many different things that often seem irreconcilable with each other.

“What troubles most people is that they are unable to reconcile their ideas with reality, pleasure evades them, wishes are fulfilled too late, and what they do achieve does not give them the pleasure they had expected in anticipation. Fate has placed the poet above all this—like a god. He sees the whirlpool of passions, the fruitless activity of families and nations, the serious problems born of misunderstandings, fraught with dangerous consequences, that a single word could often dispel. He experiences in himself all the joys and sorrows of human existence. And whereas men of the world either consume their time in melancholy brooding over losses, or embrace their fate with unbridled joy, the poet with his receptive and fluid mind moves like the sun from night to day, tuning his harp with gentle transitions from joy to pain. The flower of wisdom grows naturally out of the soil of his heart, and whereas others, when they dream in waking life, are frightened by the images that arise from their senses, the poet lives out the dream of life in constant wakefulness, and integrates even the most extraordinary occurrence into both past and future. The poet is teacher, prophet, friend of gods and men. How can you expect him to lower himself to some miserable trade or occupation? Built like a bird to soar above the earth, nest in high trees, nourish himself from buds and fruits, moving easily from branch to branch—how can he at the same time be an ox pulling a plough, a hound trained to follow a scent, or a watchdog on a chain in a farmyard, barking to ward off intruders?”

Werner listened to all this, as one can well imagine, with some astonishment, and then said: “If only men were made like birds and, instead of laboring away, could spend their days in a state of blissful pleasure! If only, when winter comes, they could escape to faraway climes, and avoid all dearth and cold!”

“That is indeed how poets lived when true value was better recognized, and so they should always live,” Wilhelm declared. “Inwardly they are so well provided for, that they need little sustenance from outside. The gift that they have of presenting to men glorious feelings and wondrous images in sweet words and melodies that clothe every object, has always captivated the world and secured them a rich inheritance. They were listened to at the courts of kings, the tables of the rich, and the doors of lovers, while eyes and minds were closed to all else, just as the song of the nightingale strongly affects us from out of the dark thickets through which we wander, and we stand still and listen, enraptured and grateful. They found a world that was always open to them, and their seemingly humble station increased the respect that was paid to them. Heroes listened to their songs and conquerors revered them, because, without the poet’s songs, their mighty presence would vanish like the wind. Lovers wished to experience their desires and joys as strongly and harmoniously as the poet described them. Even rich men could not see the value of

their treasured possessions as clearly as when these were transfigured and enriched by the poet's sense of values. Who but the poet, one might say, fashioned gods, lifted us up to them, and brought them down to us?"

"My dear Wilhelm, I have often regretted your strenuous attempts to banish from your mind what you feel so strongly," said Werner after some thought. "If I am not mistaken, you might better try to achieve some reconciliation with yourself, instead of working yourself up into a state of irritation at the magnitude of your loss. Why deprive yourself of all other pleasures because of the loss of the joys of innocence?"

"Don't think me ridiculous," Wilhelm replied, "when I tell you that I am still pursued by the images of those joys, however much I try to banish them from my thoughts, and all those former desires are still firmly implanted in my heart—even more so than before. For what else is left for me in my misery? If anyone had ever told me that the arms of my spirit, with which I reached out into infinity and hoped to grasp great things, would so soon be broken, I would have been utterly despondent. And now that judgment has been passed on me and I have lost her who, instead of a god, was to lead me towards the fulfilment of all my desires, what is left for me but resignation to pain and bitterness? I must admit, Werner, that, in all my secret plans, she was the foundation block on which my rope ladder was secured. Hopefully courting dangers this adventurous spirit of mine floated in the air, but the foundation broke and it fell to the ground, shattered at the base of its aspirations. There is no hope or consolation for me anymore! I will not keep any of these wretched papers." With these words he jumped up, grabbed a few more bundles, tore them open and threw them in the fire. Werner tried to stop him, but in vain. "Let me be!" said Wilhelm, "what's the use of these wretched scribblings—they are not a stage toward anything, nor encouragement for anything anymore—are they to remain to torment me till the end of my days, a mockery instead of arousing sympathy or wonder? What a wretched state I am in, what a miserable fate is mine! Now I understand at last the laments of those poets, who achieved wisdom through suffering. I used to think I was indestructible, invulnerable, but now I see that an early but deep wound will never, never heal. I feel that I will take it with me into the grave. The pain will not leave me all my life. It will finally kill me. And the memory of her, worthless as she was, will stay with me always, live and die with me.—But, my friend, if I am to speak truthfully, she was not entirely worthless. Her profession, her experiences have absolved her a thousand times in my mind. I was too cruel. You yourself savagely imbued me with your own coldness and harshness. You fettered my distracted feelings, prevented me from doing for her and me what I owed to us both. Who knows what state she is in now, all because of me—what despair and helplessness I have abandoned her to—all this is gradually beginning to weigh on my conscience! Isn't it possible, perhaps, that she could have given me some explanation? Isn't that possible? Misunderstandings can create such confusion, circumstances can so often pardon mistakes! I picture her so often,

sitting alone in the quiet, resting her head on her elbows, and saying: 'So this is the troth he swore, the love he promised me! How could he so cruelly destroy the beautiful life we were sharing!'" Wilhelm burst into a flood of tears, sank his head onto the table, and covered the remaining papers with his tears.

Werner stood beside him in acute embarrassment. He had not expected such a wild outburst of passion. Several times he tried to interrupt and change the course of the conversation, but always without success. He was quite unable to halt the flow. But his long-lasting friendship with Wilhelm took control of the situation, and as Wilhelm poured out his misery, he showed his deep and sincere concern by maintaining silence. And so they spent that evening: Wilhelm still immersed in sorrowful reflection, and Werner alarmed by this new outbreak of a passion that he thought he had long since curbed in his friend by what he thought was good advice and active encouragement.

Chapter Three

After such setbacks Wilhelm usually devoted himself all the more vigorously to business affairs, and this was indeed the best way for him to flee the labyrinth that was once again opening up enticingly before him. His easy manner with strangers and his ability to conduct correspondence in almost all languages gave his father and his associates increased hope, and compensated for the break in their plans due to the sickness of which they did not know the cause. So they decided once again to dispatch him on a business trip, and we catch up with him riding along on his horse, his clothes in a saddlebag—stimulated by the good fresh air and by the thought of going somewhere. He was proceeding in the direction of a mountainous area where he had some business to attend to.

He passed through valleys and hills with a feeling of extreme pleasure, seeing for the first time in his life overhanging cliffs, deep ravines, raging streams and tree-clad slopes, though such landscapes had haunted his dreams from his earliest days. In fact, he felt young again. All the pain he had suffered was washed away from his thoughts, and he began joyfully to recite passages from certain poems, especially from the *Pastor Fido* of Guarini, which crowded in on his mind in these isolated spots. He even recalled certain passages from his own poems and declaimed these with particular satisfaction. He was filling the world around him with figures from the past, and every step forward was accompanied by a sense of important actions he was destined to perform, and noteworthy events that would occur.

Several persons, coming up from behind him, greeted him and then hurried on ahead up the steep footpaths through the mountains, interrupting the silent course of his meditation without, however, his paying much attention to them. But finally a talkative fellow told him the reason why all these people were going this way. "At Hochdorf," the man said, "there is to be a play tonight and

people from all around are going to see it.” “Are you telling me,” said Wilhelm, “that the art of the theater has penetrated these dense woods and built a temple, and that I am on my way to celebrate there?” “You will be even more surprised when you learn who the actors are. There is a large factory in the neighborhood, which employs many people. The owner, living as he does apart from all human society, knows no better way of occupying his workers in winter, than encouraging them to perform plays, for he will not countenance card playing and other coarse amusements. So this is how they spend their long evenings; and today being the old man’s birthday, they are putting on a special performance.”

So Wilhelm went to Hochdorf, where he had planned to spend the night anyway. He dismounted at the factory whose owner was on his list of creditors. When he gave his name, the old man expressed his delight at seeing him: “So you, sir,” he said, “are the son of that worthy man to whom I owe so much thanks, and still some money. Your father has been very patient with me, and I would really be an utter rascal if I did not pay up promptly and gladly. You have arrived at just the right time to see that I mean what I say.” He called in his wife, who was just as pleased to see Wilhelm as he was, said how like his father he was and regretted that, because of the many visitors, she could not put him up for the night. The business matter was soon settled, and Wilhelm put the small roll of gold in his pocket, hoping that all his other transactions would be so easily completed.

The hour was approaching when the play was due to begin. They were still waiting for the head forester, who eventually arrived, accompanied by several hunters, and was greeted with the greatest respect. The assembled company was then led into the barn alongside the garden, which was to serve as the theater. The whole place had been made pleasant and cheerful, though without any particular signs of good taste. One of the painters at the factory, who had worked for a time at the court theater, had produced some sort of forest, street and interior to serve as backdrops. The text of the play had been borrowed from a travelling company of actors and adapted to the needs of the present performers. And such as it was, it was entertaining enough. The plot, in which two lovers try to steal a girl from her guardian and then from each other, produced all sorts of interesting situations. This was the first play that Wilhelm had seen for a long time, and he engaged in various reflections as a result. It was full of action but lacking in real character portrayal. It amused and delighted, like all primitive forms of drama. For simple people are satisfied by seeing plenty of action, whereas a more cultured spectator will have his feelings engaged as well, and only a truly cultured person wants to reflect on a play. Wilhelm would gladly have helped the actors a bit here and there, for little would have been needed to improve the performance considerably.

He was disturbed in his silent musings by the tobacco smoke, which got thicker and thicker. The forester lit his pipe soon after the play started, and gradually several others took the same liberty. The big dogs were also a trouble-

some nuisance. They had indeed been left outside, but they soon found their way through a back door into the theater, ran onto the stage and into the actors, then jumped over the pit to their master who was sitting in the front row.

As an epilogue they offered a tribute. A portrait of the old man in his wedding clothes had been placed on an altar and decked out with flowers. All the actors paid homage to it in appropriate postures of respect. The youngest child, dressed in white, stepped up and delivered a speech in verse, by which the whole family and the forester, who was thinking of his own children, were moved to tears. And so the play ended, and Wilhelm could not refrain from stepping onto the stage to look at the actresses at closer range, praising their performance, and giving them advice for the future.

He attended to his other business obligations, in various mountain places, but not all of them were absolved so easily or pleasantly as here in Hochdorf. Some of the creditors asked for further time, some were plain rude, and some even denied that they owed any money. According to the instructions that had been given him, Wilhelm was required to start proceedings against some of them—which meant finding a lawyer, briefing him, appearing in court, and engaging in various other tiresome duties. It was just as aggravating when people tried to show him their respect. He found few who could give him information, few with whom he could hope to enter into a useful business relationship. In addition there were unfortunately several rainy days, and journeying on horseback in this sort of country became extremely arduous. He was therefore relieved when he came into flat country again, and found a pleasant little country town at the foot of a hill, on a beautiful fertile plain beside a gentle river, all bathed in sunshine. He had no business to transact in this particular place, but decided to stay there for a few days to give himself some rest, and some respite for his horse, which had suffered from the bad roads.

Chapter Four

Wilhelm stopped off at the inn on the marketplace. Inside things were very lively indeed and everyone seemed to be having a good time. A company of acrobats, jugglers and tightrope dancers had just moved in with their families, and there was even a strong man amongst them. They were preparing for a public performance, and occupied themselves in the meantime with all sorts of pranks. They argued with the landlord, then quarrelled amongst themselves. The subjects of their disputes were certainly not worth quarrelling about, and the way they expressed their satisfaction was absolutely insufferable. So Wilhelm hesitated whether to stay there or not, as he stood by the entrance watching the workmen assembling a platform on the square.

A young girl came up selling roses and other flowers from a basket, he bought a nice bouquet, tied it up to his satisfaction, and was contemplating his handiwork with pleasure, when the window of another inn on the other side

of the square was opened and an attractive woman appeared in it. He could see, despite the distance, that her face had a pleasant gaiety. Her blond hair fell loosely around her neck, and she seemed to turn and look at him. Shortly afterward a boy wearing a barber's apron and a white jacket came out and greeted him with the message that "the lady at the window ventured to ask if he would give her some of his beautiful flowers."—"She may have them all," said Wilhelm, giving the boy the whole bunch, and with it his compliments to the lovely lady, who responded to his message with a friendly greeting and then retired from the window.

Reflecting on this pleasant episode, he was going upstairs to his room when a young creature jumped out at him and immediately attracted his attention. The child was neatly dressed in a short silk bodice with slashed Spanish sleeves and puffed-out long slim trousers. Its long black hair was curled and wound in locks and braids on its head. He looked at the figure with amazement, uncertain whether it was a boy or a girl. But he finally decided in favor of the latter and stopped her as she was rushing past, wished her good-day, and asked to whom she belonged, although he could easily see that she must be a member of the group of acrobats and dancers. With a dark and penetrating sidelong glance she broke loose and rushed into the kitchen, without saying a word.

Further up the stairs there was a broad landing on which two men were practicing fencing, trying out their skill on each other. One of them obviously belonged to the troupe, the other had a somewhat less savage appearance. Wilhelm watched them and had cause to admire them both, and when the wilder one, who was husky and had a black beard, left the scene, the other one offered Wilhelm his rapier, with a gesture of great courtesy. "If you are prepared to take on a pupil," said Wilhelm, "I would be glad to try a few passes with you." They fenced together, and although the other was far superior to Wilhelm, he was polite enough to say that it was all a matter of practice, and Wilhelm had shown he had been taught by a good, solid, German fencing master.

Their conversation was interrupted by the hubbub created by the troupe leaving the inn in order to inform the townsfolk of the forthcoming spectacle and thereby arouse their interest in the performance. First came a drummer, and behind him the manager on horseback, and then, mounted on an equally skinny nag, a female dancer, holding a child decked out in ribbons and finery. The rest of the troupe came on foot, some of them carrying children in fantastic positions comfortably on their shoulders, and amongst these Wilhelm noticed again the dark, somber-looking young girl. A clown was running around in the gathering crowd, handing out playbills as he kissed a girl or smacked a little boy, all the time making jokes, which were so easy to grasp that everybody felt drawn towards him and eager to get to know him better. The playbills underscored the many different skills of the performers, especially those of a Monsieur Narcisse and Mademoiselle Landrinette, who, as

principals, were wise enough to absent themselves from the procession, in order to give themselves a higher status and arouse more curiosity.

During the parade the lovely woman in the neighboring inn reappeared at the window, and Wilhelm lost no time in enquiring about her from his fencing partner, whom we shall call Laertes. He offered to take Wilhelm over to meet her. "She and I," said Laertes with a smile, "are the remains of a company of actors which was disbanded here recently. We liked the place so much that we decided to stay here for a while and use up our little remaining cash, while a friend has gone off to find a place for himself and us."

Laertes accompanied his new acquaintance to the door of Philine's room, where he left him for a moment while he went to buy candy in a nearby store. "You will certainly be grateful to me," he said on his return, "for providing you with this delightful acquaintance." The girl came out to meet them, wearing a pair of light slippers with high heels. She had thrown a black mantilla over her white negligé which, because it was not quite clean, gave her a domestic, relaxed appearance; and her short skirt revealed a pair of the tiniest feet imaginable.

"I am glad to see you," she called out to Wilhelm, "and thank you so much for the lovely flowers." She led him into the room with one hand while she pressed the flowers to her bosom with the other. When they had sat down and were engaged in some casual conversation to which she managed to give a charming twist, Laertes shook into her lap some burnt almonds which she immediately began to nibble. "Just look what a baby this young fellow is," she said: "He will try to persuade you that I am a passionate sweet eater, but actually he's the one who can't exist without eating something sweet." "Well," said Laertes in reply, "let us agree that in this as in so much else we like to keep each other company. For example, today is such a nice day. I would suggest that we ride out and have lunch at the mill." "Good idea," said Philine. "We must provide our new friend with a change of scene."

Laertes ran off (he never walked) and Wilhelm wanted to go back for a moment to his room to fix his hair, which was still a bit untidy from the journey. "You can do that here," said Philine, calling her young servant boy, and persuaded Wilhelm very sweetly to take off his coat, put on her smock and let the boy fix his hair right there in her presence. "One can't waste time," she said, "for one never knows how long one will be together."

The boy did not do his job very well, more because of his surly indifference than because he lacked the necessary skill. He kept pulling Wilhelm's hair and it seemed he would never be finished. Philine reproved him several times for his ill-mannered behavior, and finally lost her patience, shoved him aside and threw him out. She then took things into her own hands and curled Wilhelm's hair very efficiently and elegantly. She didn't hurry over this, kept changing her mind on what she was doing, and couldn't avoid her knees touching his, and her bouquet and bosom getting so close to his lips that he was more than once tempted to give her a kiss.

When Wilhelm had removed some powder from his forehead with a knife that she had for this purpose, she said: "Keep that in remembrance of me." It was a pretty little knife with a handle of inlaid steel on which were engraved the words: "Remember me." Wilhelm put it in his pocket, thanked her, and asked her permission to give her something in exchange.

Now they were all ready. Laertes had found a coach, and off they went on a very pleasant excursion. Philine threw something or other out of the window to every beggar, with a few kind and cheerful words. They came to the mill and had just ordered something to eat, when musicians started playing in front of the building. They were miners, singing pleasant songs in loud, shrill voices to the accompaniment of a zither and triangle. They were soon surrounded by people who came up to listen, and guests applauded them from the windows of the mill. Noticing this extra attention the musicians spread out in preparation, so it seemed, for something really special. After a short pause, a miner stepped forward with a hoe, and made digging motions whilst the others played a solemn melody. After this, up came a farmer from the crowd and made threatening gestures at the miner, indicating that he should remove himself from here. The spectators were puzzled by this, and only when the "farmer" opened his mouth to reprove the other man for digging in his field, did they realize that he was a miner dressed as a peasant. The first man calmly told the other that he had every right to start digging here, and began to explain the basic elements of mining. The farmer, who didn't understand the strange terminology, asked all sorts of stupid questions at which the spectators, feeling superior, burst into laughter. The miner tried to explain to the farmer the advantages he would gain, once he had dug up the treasures that lay beneath the earth; and the farmer's threatening attitude became gradually modified, and they parted as good friends. But the miner had won the argument.

"This little dialogue," said Wilhelm as they sat at table, "shows quite clearly how useful the theater could be for all classes of society, and what profit the state could derive from displaying on the stage the best side of human occupations, vocations and undertakings, those aspects that the state must itself respect and support. Nowadays all we seem to see is the ridiculous side of things; the writer of comedies has become a sort of malicious monitor of human follies, always on the lookout for some new one to register on his list, and jubilant when he finds one. Wouldn't it be a satisfying and worthy occupation for any statesman to survey the influence of the various classes of society on each other, and thereby give support to a writer with a real sense of humor? I am convinced that in this way many useful as well as entertaining plays could be produced."

"So far as I have been able to observe in my own travels," said Laertes, "there is more discouragement than the opposite, more refusals, denials and rejection than permission, encouragement and rewards. Everything is allowed to go on until it becomes harmful; and then it is angrily and violently terminated."

"Let's stop talking about the state and statesmen," said Philine. "They always suggest full-bottomed wigs to me, and it doesn't matter who is wearing a wig,

I have a twitchy feeling in my fingers and long to pull them off the venerable gentlemen, and dance around in the room laughing at their bald pates.”

She cut off the conversation with some lively songs, which she performed very prettily, and pressed for a speedy return to the town, so that they should not miss the evening performance by the acrobats and tightrope dancers. Comical almost to the point of eccentricity, she continued to show her generosity to the wayside beggars on the return journey, and, since she and both the men had run out of money, she threw her hat out of the window to a young girl, and her scarf to an old woman.

Philine invited her two companions to her quarters, saying that there would be a better view of the performance from her windows than from the other inn.

When they arrived, they found the platform already set up and carpets hung up to make a colorful background for the show. The springboards were already in place, the slack rope fastened to the posts, and the tightrope pulled over the blocks. The square was filled mostly with the common people, and the windows with persons of quality. The clown began to put the audience in a good mood and capture their attention with some silly tricks, and these, as always, were greeted with laughter. Then several children, executing the weirdest contortions with their bodies, aroused both horror and amazement; and Wilhelm was filled with deep pity when he saw amongst them the same child that had so interested him earlier, striving to achieve these abnormal postures. But then came the merry acrobats who delighted everybody by twisting and turning in the air, first alone, then one after another, and finally all together. At this there was vigorous clapping and shouts of joy from all the spectators.

And then all eyes were fixed on something quite different. One after another the children stepped onto the tightrope. First came those who were still learning the art, so that the performance would be prolonged and the difficulties of this particular skill amply demonstrated. Then came the men and women who showed only a moderate amount of skill—but not yet Monsieur Narcisse or Mademoiselle Landrinette. Finally these two appeared from behind the red curtains of a sort of tent, and fulfilled every expectation of the eager spectators by their attractive figures and elegant costumes. He was a lively young man of medium height with black eyes and a heavy pigtail; she was equally attractive and looked just as strong. They followed each other on the tightrope, executing steps and leaps with the greatest ease and maintaining unusual postures. Her lightness, his boldness, and the precision with which both of them carried out their artistic feats, increased the enthusiasm of the spectators at every new twist or turn. The easy grace with which they conducted themselves, as compared with the apparent strain and effort of the others, gave them such an air of superiority, that they might well have been the lord and master of the entire troupe; indeed everyone thought they deserved such an important position.

The enthusiasm of the people at the windows was just as great as that of the people down on the square, for the ladies had their eyes fixed on Narcisse and the gentlemen on Landrinette. The people on the square yelled with delight;

the more refined watchers at the windows expressed their approval by clapping their hands, but they did not laugh at the clown, as those down below did. Only a few of those on the square slunk away when members of the troupe came through the crowd with pewter plates to collect money.

"It seems to me that they did very well," said Wilhelm to Philine, who was with him at the window. "I admire their ability to make even quite small feats have a really telling effect by bringing them on in succession, each at the appropriate moment; and also how they managed to combine the clumsiness of the children and the virtuosity of their star performers into a total effect which held our attention and pleasantly diverted us."

The people on the square had gradually dispersed, leaving it empty, and meanwhile Philine and Laertes were arguing about the relative quality of the figures and skills of Narcisse and Landrinette, and teasing each other. Wilhelm saw the strange girl standing alongside children playing on the street, and drew this to the attention of Philine, who called and beckoned to the child with her usual vivacity. But since the child seemed unwilling to come to her, she went to fetch it herself, singing as she clattered down the stairs on her high-heeled slippers.

"Here's our mystery," she said, drawing the child into the room. But the girl standing in the doorway, as if eager to slip away, placed her right hand on her chest and her left on her temple, and made a deep bow. "Don't be afraid, little one," said Wilhelm, walking up to her. She looked at him with an expression of uncertainty, and stepped forward a few paces. "What is your name?" he asked. "They call me Mignon." "How old are you?" "Nobody has counted." "Who was your father?" "The big devil is dead."

"Well, that's all very odd!" said Philine. They asked her a few more questions, which she answered in broken German and a strange, formal manner, bowing deeply each time and placing her hands as before on her chest and temple.

Wilhelm could not take his eyes off her; her whole appearance and the mystery that surrounded her completely absorbed his mind and feelings. He thought she was probably twelve or thirteen years old. She was well built, but her limbs suggested further development to come, which possibly had been arrested. Her features were not regular, but striking: her forehead seemed to veil some secret, her nose was unusually beautiful, her mouth, though too tight-lipped for her age and inclined to twitch at times on one side, had a certain winsome charm about it. The grease paint almost obscured her dark complexion. Wilhelm was so absorbed in contemplating her, that he lapsed into silence and became completely oblivious of the others. But Philine roused him out of his daze by offering the child some of the candy she had left over, and then gave the girl a sign that she should leave, which she did, with her usual bow, and in a flash ran out of the door.

The time came for the other three to separate for the evening, but before doing so they agreed to embark next day on another excursion. They decided

to go out again for lunch, but this time to a different place, a nearby hunting lodge. Wilhelm spent much of the evening praising Philine to Laertes, to which the latter reacted lightheartedly and curtly.

The next morning, after an hour's fencing practice, they went to Philine's inn, having earlier seen the rented coach. But Wilhelm was surprised to find that the coach had left and Philine was nowhere to be found. They were told that she had driven off with two strangers who had arrived that very morning. He had been looking forward to a pleasant time in her company and could not conceal his irritation. Laertes, on the other hand, just laughed, and said: "That's what I like about her! That's exactly how she is! But let's go straight to the hunting lodge, and let's not give up our excursion on her account, wherever she may have taken herself off to."

On the way Wilhelm expressed his disapproval of such fickle behavior, but Laertes replied that he did not think it was fickle to remain true to character. "When Philine agrees to something, or gives someone a promise, she does so on the unspoken condition that it will suit her when the time comes. She likes to make gifts, but one must always be prepared to give them back."

"What a strange character!" said Wilhelm. "Not strange at all," Laertes replied, "and in no wise hypocritical. I love her for it, and am her friend, because she represents in all its true colors the sex that I have such good reason to hate. She is the real Eve, the progenitrix of the whole female race. They're all like her, though they won't admit it."

The conversation continued in this vein, with Laertes venting his wrath against the whole female sex but without giving any reasons. Wilhelm was depressed by what Laertes had been saying, because it reminded him all too vividly of his own experience with Mariane. They entered a forest, and what should they find but Philine sitting alone at a stone table beside a spring shaded by a group of fine old trees. She greeted them with a cheerful song and when Laertes asked what had happened to her companions, she said: "I led them a real dance, and fooled them. That's just what they deserved. On the way here I tested their generosity, and when I found out they were skinflints I decided to punish them. When we arrived, they asked the waiter what there was to eat, and with usual glibness of tongue he recited a list of everything they had, and other things too. I saw their embarrassment: they looked at each other, dithered a bit, and then asked the prices. 'Why should you concern yourselves with all that?' I said. 'It's the business of the lady to decide on the menu. Let me take care of it.' So I ordered the craziest lunch, some of which had to be brought from elsewhere in the neighborhood. The waiter, after some grimacing on my part, had become my ally in all this and gave me good solid help, and we scared them both so much at the thought of the sumptuous banquet we had ordered, that they decided to take a walk in the woods, and I doubt whether they will come back! I laughed and laughed for full fifteen minutes, and I shall go on laughing whenever I recall the expression on their faces." Laertes regaled them at table with similar stories, and

they all entertained each other with tales of misunderstandings and hoodwinkings of one kind and another.

A young man whom they knew from the town came walking through the woods with a book in his hand, sat down beside them and praised the beauty of the place. He directed their attention to the rustling spring, the movement of the branches, the light effects and the song of the birds. At this Philine sang a song about a cuckoo, which seemed to displease the newcomer, and he soon left.

"I don't want to hear another word about Nature and all its beauties," said Philine, once he had gone. "There is nothing more insufferable than having one's pleasure analyzed while one is enjoying it. When the weather's fine, you go for a walk; when the music starts, you dance. But who wants to *think* about the fine weather or the music? It's the dancers that interest us, not the music; and to look into a pair of beautiful dark eyes doesn't do a pair of blue eyes any harm. Compared with that, what's the use of rustling springs and old worm-eaten lime trees?" As she said this, she was gazing into Wilhelm's eyes, and her glance could not but penetrate to the gates of his heart. "You're quite right," he said, with some embarrassment. "People are what's most interesting, and perhaps that's all we should be interested in. For everything else around us is either the atmosphere in which we live, or instruments that we use for ourselves. The more we occupy ourselves with our environment, the more we think about it or partake of it, the less alive is our sense of our own value and of belonging to a community of fellow men. People who attach great importance to gardens, buildings, clothes, jewels or possessions of any kind, are not very sociable and not very agreeable. They lose sight of other people, and few of them succeed in entertaining them and amusing them. Don't we see that in the theater? A good actor can make us forget a wretched decor, but a fine theater simply makes us more aware of the poverty of the acting."

When they had finished eating, Philine ensconced herself in the tall, shady grass. Her two companions had to bring her flowers in quantity. She made a single wreath out of these and set it on her head, which made her look unbelievably charming. There were enough flowers left for her to make another wreath, which she did while the two men sat down beside her. When after much joking and innuendo she had it finished, she lowered it delicately onto Wilhelm's head, and kept rearranging it till she had it just right. "Am I then to go empty-handed?" asked Laertes. "Not at all," replied Philine. "You shall have no cause for complaint"; and with that she took the wreath off her own head and put it on his. "If we were rivals in love, we could have a fierce argument as to whom you are favoring more," said Laertes. "In that case," she replied, "you would be silly fools." She leaned over him, offering her mouth to be kissed and turned immediately to put her arm around Wilhelm and plant a passionate kiss on his lips. "Which tasted better?" she said, teasingly. "Marvelous!" said Laertes. "It seems that something like that could never taste of wormwood." "As little as any present enjoyed without envy or pride. But now,"

she said, "I would like to dance for an hour or so, and then we should go back to our acrobats."

They went into the house, and there they found music. Philine, who was a good dancer, cheered them both up. Wilhelm was not clumsy, but he lacked experience in dancing; so Philine and Laertes decided to give him a few lessons.

By now it was getting late, and when they arrived back, the rope dancers had already begun the show. There were still many spectators on the market-square, but a good number of them had gone over to the door of the inn where Wilhelm was staying, because, as our three friends noticed when they got out of the coach, there was some kind of trouble there. Wilhelm rushed over and pushed his way through the crowd to see what was happening, and, to his horror, saw the manager of the troupe dragging the mysterious child by the hair out of the building and beating her frail body mercilessly with the handle of a whip.

Wilhelm tore over to the man and seized him by the chest. "Let go of that child!" he cried, yelling like a maniac, "or one of us will be dead!" With that, inflamed with anger, he grabbed the man by the throat so fiercely that the fellow thought he was going to choke, let go of the girl, and tried to defend himself. Some of the bystanders, equally concerned about the child but unwilling to start a fight, now grabbed his arms, took away the whip, threatened him and poured abuse on him. The man himself, his only weapon now being his mouth, began to threaten and curse abominably, and said that this useless, lazy creature wouldn't do what she was supposed to, refusing to perform the egg dance that he had promised the public. He was going to kill her, and no one would stop him. He then tried to break loose to find the child who was hiding in the crowd. But Wilhelm held him back and said: "You shall not see or touch that child until you explain to the magistrate where you stole her from. I will go to any length; you will not escape me." These words, which Wilhelm uttered in the heat of his anger, trusting some deep dark feeling (or inspiration, if you like) but without much thought or intention, brought the infuriated fellow to his senses. "What should I do with such a creature?" he said: "She's utterly useless to me. Just pay me what her clothes cost and then you can keep her. But let's settle the matter this very evening." With this he rushed off to continue the show and appease the spectators with a few worthwhile artistic feats.

When things had quietened down, Wilhelm looked around for the child, but couldn't find her anywhere. Some people said they had seen her in the attic, some on the roofs of neighboring houses. But after searching everywhere they decided to wait and see if she would turn up again of her own accord.

Meanwhile Narcisse had come back and Wilhelm questioned him about the child and where it came from. He did not know anything about this, for he had only recently joined the troupe. Instead, he went on to tell Wilhelm volubly and very amusingly about his own experiences. When Wilhelm congratulated him on his success with the public, he seemed quite indifferent. "We are used

to being laughed at and being admired, but all this approval doesn't improve our lot. The manager pays us, and has to make his profit." He then was about to take his leave and hurry away, when Wilhelm asked him where he was off to in such a hurry. The young man smiled, and admitted that his figure and his talents aroused elsewhere more solid approval than he got from the public. Several women had sent messages that they were eager to know him better, and he was afraid that, with all the visits that he had to pay, he would hardly get through by midnight. He went on to enumerate very frankly all his assignments, and would have given names and street numbers if Wilhelm had not disdained such indiscretion and politely dismissed him.

While this was going on, Laertes had been entertaining Landrinette and assuring her that she was fully deserving of being a woman and remaining one.

The negotiations with the manager began, and the child was transferred to Wilhelm's keeping for the sum of thirty thalers. The black-bearded, intemperate Italian gave up all his rights to her, but would say nothing about her origins, except that he had acquired her on the death of his brother who, because of his extraordinary performing skills, had been known as the Big Devil.

Most of the next morning was spent in trying to find the child. Every corner of the house, every inch of the neighborhood was searched—but with no results. She had disappeared; and it was feared that she might have drowned herself, or done herself harm in some other way.

Even the charms of Philine could not distract Wilhelm from his anxiety. He spent a mournful day, just brooding. Even the performance that night, when acrobats and dancers exerted all their powers to make the very best impression, did not cheer or divert his heavy mind.

The number of spectators was so greatly increased by those from neighboring villages that the applause snowballed in intensity. The leaps over swords and through the paper bottom of a cask created a great sensation. The strong man, to everyone's horror and amazement, stretched himself out across the space between two chairs and then lifted an anvil onto his arched stomach and had two husky smiths forge a horseshoe on it. To end the show, there was the so-called Hercules Tower, never before seen in these parts, in which a row of men stood on the shoulders of another row, and on top of them women and youths, so that a living pyramid was built, with a child standing on its head at the top as the pinnacle and weather vane. Narcisse and Landrinette were carried in sedan chairs on the shoulders of the others, through the best streets of the town, which was greeted by the populace with shouts of delight. They were showered with ribbons, flowers and silks, and everyone pressed forward to get a closer look at them, happy to see them and to be honored by a glance from them.

"What actor, writer, or indeed what human being would not feel he had reached the summit of his desires when, by some noble word or deed, he produced such a universal impression? What a rich experience it would be to disseminate worthy human feelings so quickly—like electricity—through the ranks of the common people, such as these people did by the display of their

bodily skill—to impart a sense of common humanity to the masses, inflame and disturb them with a display of all our pleasures and misfortunes, wisdom and follies, stupidity and idiocy, and release their sullen minds into a state of active, vigorous, unimpeded freedom!” Thus spoke Wilhelm, but since neither Philine nor Laertes seemed inclined to continue such a discourse, he was obliged to articulate to himself these favorite reflections of his, as he walked through the streets far into the night, and indulge once more in his passionate desire to incorporate into drama all that was great, noble and good. And he could do so now in the full vigor and freedom of his unfettered imagination.

Chapter Five

The next day, as soon as the tightrope artists had departed with a great deal of noise, Mignon appeared and stepped up to Wilhelm and Laertes who had resumed their fencing practice. “Where have you been hiding?” Wilhelm asked her gently. “We were very worried about you.” The child looked at him, but said nothing. “Now you are ours,” said Laertes. “We have bought you.” “How much did you pay?” she asked curtly. “A hundred ducats,” said Laertes. “And when you pay us back, you may go free.” “That’s a lot, isn’t it?” the child asked. “Yes indeed, so just see that you behave well.” “I’ll be your servant,” she replied.

From that moment on, she watched carefully to see what services the waiter had performed for the two friends, and would not let him enter the room anymore. She wanted to do everything herself and performed her various services, though slowly and sometimes awkwardly, but correctly and very attentively.

She would often take a vessel of water and wash her face so vigorously and thoroughly that she almost rubbed her cheeks raw. Laertes teased her about this, but found out that she was trying to get rid of the paint on her cheeks and thought that the red patches she had caused by her vigorous rubbing, were particularly stubborn paint. They explained this to her, and once she stopped what she had been doing, a fine brown complexion, brightened by only a hint of red, was revealed.

Attracted more than he cared to admit to himself both by the wanton charms of Philine and the mystery surrounding the child, Wilhelm spent several days in this strange company. He justified this by diligent practice in fencing and dancing, since he might not so easily have an opportunity to indulge in these two occupations.

One day, to his surprise and delight, he saw Melina and his wife arriving. Once they had greeted him, they enquired about the actors, and were dismayed to learn that the director had long since left, and the actors, except for very few, had also gone off to various other places. Since getting married—in which, as we have seen, Wilhelm had been helpful—the young couple had

been looking in various places for a job, but so far without success. They had been advised to try here: several people they met on the way reported that they had seen good theater. Philine took a dislike to Madame Melina, and the lively Laertes to her husband. They would gladly have gotten rid of the newcomers immediately, and Wilhelm was not able to change their unfavorable opinion despite his repeated assertions that they were really quite decent people.

This addition to the company disturbed in several ways the happy-go-lucky existence of the adventurous spirits of Philine, Laertes and Wilhelm. They found a room in the inn where Philine was staying, and Melina began immediately to haggle and complain, demanding better quarters, more copious meals and faster service for less money. In a very short time he had the innkeeper and the waiters scowling; and whereas the others, intent on enjoying life, accepted what was served and paid promptly in order not to think about what they had been eating, Melina criticized every meal and then went over it again afterwards, so that Philine had no hesitation in declaring that he chewed over everything.

Madame Melina was even more distasteful to the vivacious Philine, for although she was not uneducated she was totally lacking in mind and soul. She recited quite well, but was always reciting, and just words, emphasizing particular passages but without expressing the spirit of the whole. She was by no means unpleasant to people—especially not to men, and those she associated with usually felt that she had a fine mind. For she knew how to adopt the feelings of others. She would feel her way into the respect of a friend by agreeing with his ideas until she was out of her depth, and then wax ecstatic at what was new to her. She knew when to talk and when to keep quiet, and although she was not malicious, she knew how to find someone's weak spot.

Chapter Six

Melina spent his time discovering what was still left of the properties which had belonged to the troupe. The scenery and costumes had been left as securities with some local merchants, and a lawyer had the authority of the previous director to sell these, under certain conditions, if anybody turned up who wanted them. Melina wanted to see what there was, and took Wilhelm along. Although he would not admit it, Wilhelm felt a certain attraction towards these things when they entered the rooms where they were stored. Although the scenery was all spotty and in bad shape, and the costumes—turkish, saracen, grotesque, and cowls for wizards, jews or priests—were no longer very convincing, he could not resist the feeling that it was amidst such junk as this that he had spent the happiest moments of his life. If Melina could have gazed into his heart, he would have urged him even more strongly to provide a sum of money to redeem these scattered remnants and put them together again into a living whole. “How happy I would be if I had two hundred thalers to

secure these basic theatrical materials," exclaimed Melina; "I could soon get a play together that would provide for us in this town." Wilhelm said nothing. The precious things were locked up again. And they left, both of them deep in thought.

From now on Melina talked of nothing else but plans and proposals for setting up a theater and making a profit. He tried to interest Philine and Laertes in this, and it was suggested to Wilhelm that he should advance some money and act as security. But this matter only made Wilhelm realize that he should not have spent so long in this town. He excused himself, saying that he really must think about continuing on his journey.

But the person and character of Mignon attracted him more and more. There was something strange about everything she did. She never walked up or down stairs, she always ran. She climbed up on to banisters, and before one knew it, there she was on top of a closet, sitting quite still. Wilhelm also noticed that she had a different greeting for everybody. For some time now she had been greeting him with arms folded on her breast. Some days she would be completely silent; on others she would answer certain questions, but always strangely so that it was difficult to decide whether it was a joke or her German mixed with French and Italian was intentional or simply the result of an imperfect knowledge of German. She was tireless in Wilhelm's service, getting up at sunrise but retiring early to rest on the bare floor of one of the rooms. Nothing could persuade her to sleep in a bed or on a straw mattress. He often found her washing herself. Her clothes were clean though heavily patched. Wilhelm was also told that early every morning she went to mass, and once he followed her and saw her kneeling in a corner of the church, piously saying her rosary. She did not see him, and he went home full of thoughts about this strange creature and unable to make up his mind about her.

When Melina pressed him further for money to buy the theater properties, Wilhelm became even more determined to move on. He decided that very day to write to his family, who had had no news of him for quite a while, and even began a letter to Werner. He had got quite far in the account of his various adventures—often straying from the truth without noticing it—when he discovered on the other side of the sheet some lines he had been copying for Madame Melina from his own notebook. So he tore up the sheet in a fit of displeasure, and put off writing his letters to the next post day.

Chapter Seven

One day they were all together as usual, when Philine, who was observing every horse and scrutinizing every carriage that passed, suddenly shouted: "Look! There's our dear old pedant! I wonder whom he has with him in the carriage!" She called to him, waving from her window, and the carriage stopped. A pitiful old fellow who, with his shabby, greyish-brown coat and soiled linen,

looked like a musty old schoolman, got out of the carriage and respectfully took off his hat to Philine, revealing a badly powdered and very stiff wig. Philine blew him a multitude of kisses. For though there were always men she loved and whose love she enjoyed, she took almost equal delight, and that as often as possible, in teasing those she was not in love with at the moment.

The noise with which Philine greeted her old acquaintance and the confusion which that created, was such that they neglected to look at the other persons with him. These were an oldish man with two women. Wilhelm had the feeling that he had met them somewhere before, and it soon turned out that this was indeed the case. Several years previously he had seen all three of them take part in a theatrical performance in his hometown. The two daughters had changed a lot in the meantime, but not their father. He usually played those good-natured, garrulous old men that German drama is full of and whom you can often encounter in everyday life. Since it seems to be a part of our national character to do good without ostentation, we seldom reflect on the fact that it is also possible to do what is right with some degree of graciousness and style, and as a result we tend all too easily to be cross-grained in order to emphasize by contrast the sweetness of our virtues. It was these roles that this actor played so well. He played them so often, indeed so exclusively, that he began to take on the same character in real life.

Wilhelm, once he had recognized him, became very perturbed, for he remembered having often seen him playing alongside his beloved Mariane. He could still hear him scolding and the gentle voice with which she had to counter his brusqueness in so many plays.

The first question addressed to these newcomers was an eager inquiry whether there was any hope of finding employment elsewhere, but they said that they had approached various theater troupes only to be told that there were no vacancies. Some of these companies were even concerned that the threat of approaching war might cause them to disband. The old man and his two daughters had just given up a favorable engagement because they were bored and wanted a change, and had hired a carriage together with the "schoolmaster," or "pedant" as Philine always called him, whom they had met on the road, in order to come to this particular town. But the opportunity they had hoped to find here was obviously not forthcoming.

While all the others were discussing their affairs, Wilhelm was deep in thought. He would have liked to talk to the old man privately. He wanted to hear about Mariane, but was also afraid of what he might learn; and so he was in a state of extreme uneasiness.

The two young women were very pleasant to him but even this did not rouse him from his brooding, until one particular exchange of words claimed his full attention. Friedrich, the blond boy who had been performing various services for Philine, suddenly refused to lay the table and get the meal. "I agreed to serve you," he said to Philine with some heat, "but not to wait on all sorts of other people." At this, there was a violent argument. Philine insisted that he must do his job, but he stubbornly refused. So she told him he could leave, and

go wherever he pleased. "Do you think I can't leave you, if I want to?" he said, with an air of defiance. He packed up his things and hurriedly left the house. "Go and get us what we want, Mignon!" said Philine. "Tell the waiter, and help him serve!"

At this point Mignon came up to Wilhelm and asked, in her usual laconic fashion: "Shall I? May I?" "Yes, my child," said Wilhelm. "Do what Mademoiselle requests." So she took care of everything and waited very attentively on the guests at table. After dinner Wilhelm found the opportunity to take a walk alone with the old man, and after various questions about how life had been treating him, he succeeded in turning the conversation on to the troupe he had been part of, and finally ventured to ask after Mariane.

"Don't mention that despicable creature!" the old man exclaimed. "I have vowed never to think of her again." Wilhelm was shocked, and even more discomfited by the way the old man went on to upbraid her for her frivolity and wantonness. He would gladly have terminated the conversation, but he had to suffer through the garrulous effusions of this strange man.

"I am ashamed that I was so fond of her. But if you had known her well, you would have pardoned me for that. She was so nice, so natural and good, so pleasing in her manner, so thoroughly agreeable. I would never have imagined that insolence and ingratitude were so deeply ingrained in her character."

Wilhelm had by now become resigned to hearing nothing but the very worst, when he suddenly noticed with astonishment that the old man's tone was changing. He became more gentle, and finally the words stuck in his throat, and he took out a handkerchief to dry his tears. "What is the matter?" said Wilhelm. "What makes you suddenly feel so differently? Do tell me. I am more concerned about this girl than you know. But do tell me everything."

"I have little more to say," the old man replied, lapsing back into that earlier tone of petulant severity. "I will never forgive her for what she made me suffer. She always had a certain trust in me. I loved her like a daughter and, while my wife was still living, I had decided to take her into my family in order to get her out of the clutches of the old man from whose protection I saw no possible benefits for her. But my wife died, and the whole plan came to nothing."

"Towards the end of our stay in your home town, I noticed a certain sadness about her. That would be about three years ago. I asked her about this, but she evaded my questions. Then we got ready to leave. She rode with me in the same coach and I noticed something which she herself soon confirmed: namely, that she was pregnant. She was terribly afraid that the manager would dismiss her. And indeed he soon did, cancelling her contract (which was only for six weeks anyway), and totally unconcerned about the appearances she was engaged for. He paid out what he owed her, and left her in a wretched inn in a small town."

"To Hell with all such lewd whores," said the old man, full of anger, "and especially this one. For she has ruined so much of my life. Why should I spend my time telling you how attentive I was to her needs, even when she was away

from us. I would rather throw my money into a pond and spend my time training mangy dogs than ever again devote my attentions to such a creature. For what happened? At first I got some letters of thanks, with news of various places where she had stayed; but in the end not a word, not even thanks for the money I sent her for her confinement. Dissemblance and wantonness combine in women to provide them with a comfortable life and honest fellows like me with hours of sorrow!"

Chapter Eight

Imagine Wilhelm's state of mind as he returned home from this conversation! All the old wounds had been torn open, and the feeling that she had not been quite unworthy of his love came over him again. For her whole loveable nature had come through the old man's account of his attentions to her and what he had said, albeit grudgingly, in her praise. Even his most violent denunciations of her had contained nothing to discredit her in Wilhelm's eyes, because he himself felt that he shared responsibility for her misdeeds, and her ultimate silence seemed to him not something to reproach her with, but something that filled him with anxious thoughts of what she must have been through. First the confinement, then as a mother, having to wander around the world, without anyone to assist her, wandering about with a child that was probably his—all this distressed him greatly.

Mignon had waited up for him, with a light to guide him up the stairs. When she had put down the candle, she asked his permission to give a performance for his benefit that evening. He would rather have said no, for he did not know what this might turn out to be. But he could not refuse this good-hearted creature anything. She came back into the room after a little while, carrying under one arm a carpet which she spread out on the floor. Wilhelm let her continue. She brought four lighted candles and put one at each corner of the carpet. When she next fetched a basket of eggs, her intentions became clearer. With the measured steps of an artist she paced back and forth on the carpet, distributing the eggs in definite groups. Then she called in a servant who played the violin. He stood with his instrument in one corner. She blindfolded herself, gave a sign for the music to begin, and started to move like a wound-up mechanism, beating the time of the melody with the clap of her castanets.

Nimble and lightly she executed the dance with rapid precision, stepping so briskly and firmly between and beside the eggs that at any moment one thought she would crush one of them or dislodge it by the swiftness of her twistings and turnings. But she never touched an egg despite the variety of her steps, now short, now long, including some leaps. She finally wound her way through the rows in a half-kneeling position. She pursued her course relentlessly like clockwork and the strange music gave a new twist to the movement of the rousing dance every time it started up again. Wilhelm was absolutely

transported by this strange spectacle; forgetting all his cares, he followed every step of the beloved creature, amazed to see how completely her character was manifested in the dance. Severe, sharp, dry and violent—all this she certainly was; and in her quieter movements there was solemnity rather than grace. He suddenly realized what he had been feeling about her all this time. He wanted to take this abandoned creature to his bosom as his own child, caress her and by a father's love awaken to her the joys of life.

The dance came to an end. With her feet she rolled the eggs into a pile, not overlooking or breaking one of them. Then she stood beside the pile of eggs, took off her blindfold, and terminated the performance with a bow. Wilhelm thanked her for so pleasantly and unexpectedly executing for him alone the dance that he had so much wanted to see. He stroked her cheeks and said how sorry he was that she had been treated so harshly. He promised her a new suit of clothes, whereupon she exclaimed: "In your color." He agreed to this, though he was not quite sure what she meant. She gathered up the eggs and the carpet, asked if he had any further orders, and leapt out of the room.

Wilhelm learnt from the musician that she had spent much time and effort singing the tune of the dance to him, which was a fandango, until he could play it himself; and that she had offered him money for his pains, which he had refused.

Chapter Nine

Wilhelm spent a restless night, partly wide awake and partly harried by disturbing dreams in which he saw Mariane at one moment in all her beauty, then in pitiful shape, first with the child in her arms and then without it. Dawn was just breaking, when in came Mignon with a tailor. She brought with her some grey cloth and blue taffeta, saying, in her own peculiar way, that she wanted a new jacket and sailor pants, such as she had seen on boys in the town, with blue ribbons and lapels.

Wilhelm had not worn any bright colors since losing Mariane, and had accustomed himself to grey, as the color of shades, except that he had somewhat livened up this somber garb by a light blue lining or a little collar of the same hue. Mignon, eager to wear his colors, put pressure on the tailor, who promised to deliver the suit in a short while.

That day, the dancing and fencing lessons with Laertes did not turn out too well; they were interrupted by Melina, who expatiated on the fact that they now had assembled a little company of actors that could put on plenty of plays. He renewed his request that Wilhelm should put down some money to get things started, but Wilhelm still hesitated.

Philine and the two girls came in laughing and shouting. They had worked out a plan for another outing, always eager to have a change of place and new things to look at. What they desired most, was to eat in a different place every

day. This time it seemed to be a river trip. The Pedant had already found a boat to take them down the winding course of the river, and urged on by Philine, the whole company fell in with the idea and were soon on board.

"So—what shall we do now?" said Philine when they had all found somewhere to sit. "The simplest thing would be to extemporize a play," said Laertes. "Let everyone pick a role that suits his character, and we'll see how it turns out."

"Excellent idea!" said Wilhelm. "If people don't dissemble at all but simply act according to their own impulses, harmony and contentment will not be theirs for long; and never, if they dissemble all the time. It will not be a bad idea if we assume a personality at the beginning and then show as much as we wish of the real self hidden beneath the mask."

"Yes," said Laertes. "That's why women are so agreeable, for at first they never show their true colors."

"That's because they're not as vain as men," said Madame Melina. "Men always think they are quite attractive enough as nature made them."

All this time they were moving past delightful hills and woods, gardens and vineyards, and the young women showed their enthusiasm over the landscape. Especially Madame Melina, who began ceremoniously to recite a pretty poem in the descriptive mode on a similar scene. But she was interrupted by Philine, who now proposed a rule that no one be allowed to talk about inanimate objects. She returned to the idea of extemporizing a play, supporting it vigorously. The blustering old man should be a pensioned officer, Laertes a travelling fencing master, the Pedant a Jew, and she herself a Tyrolean girl. The others could be what they wanted. They should pretend they were meeting each other for the first time on a boat going to some market town. She herself began to play her part with the Jew, and general merriment broke out.

After a while the skipper asked them whether he might take on another passenger, for a man was standing on the shore, waving. "Just what we need," said Philine. "What we need is a stowaway." An attractive man stepped on board, and from his clothing and dignified appearance he looked as though he might be a clergyman. He greeted the assembled company, which thanked him and then told him about the little amusement they were planning. He took on the role of a country parson, and to their amazement played it extremely well, admonishing at one moment and telling yarns at the next, revealing certain weaknesses but always maintaining an air of respectfulness.

Anyone who failed to act in accordance with his or her role had to pay a forfeit. Philine gathered these conscientiously and threatened particularly to shower the clergyman with kisses when the forfeits had to be redeemed. But he always remained true to character. Melina, on the other hand, was stripped of buttons, buckles and anything else that was detachable. He had chosen to represent a travelling Englishman, but could not really get into the part.

The time passed very pleasantly, with everybody exerting their wits and imagination, embroidering their parts with all sorts of quips and sallies. They

arrived at the place where they intended to spend the day, and Wilhelm, taking a walk with the clergyman (let's call him such because of his appearance and the role he was playing), found himself involved in a most interesting conversation.

"I think this kind of exercise amongst actors, especially when in the company of friends or acquaintances, is extremely useful," said the stranger. "It is the very best way to take people out of themselves and, by way of a detour, return them to themselves. It should be introduced in all theatrical companies. They should practice in this way, and the public would surely profit greatly if every month or so an unwritten play were performed, though the actors would have to prepare for this by several rehearsals."

"But an extemporized play should not be made up on the spur of the moment," Wilhelm objected. "The general plan, action and division of scenes should have been decided on, and the actors left to work out the presentation."

"Yes, indeed," said the stranger. "And once the actors were in the swing, the presentation should benefit by this procedure. Not so much the verbal presentation, for the words must be the product of the author's considered reflection, but the gestures, facial expressions, cries and the like, all that belongs to miming and what is partially articulated—an art which seems to be disappearing from our stage. There are certainly still actors in Germany whose bodies show what they are thinking and feeling, who can work up to a speech by silences, hesitations, slight and delicate movements, and can fill out pauses between speeches with appropriate gestures, connecting these pauses with the rest into a coherent whole. This use of mime to complement an actor's natural talent and to make him equal to the playwright's use of words, is however not so widespread as it should be for the benefit of those who come to the theater."

"But," said Wilhelm, "shouldn't natural talent be all that an actor, like any other artist, or indeed any human being, needs to enable him to reach the high goal he has set himself?"

"That should certainly be, and continue to be, the alpha and omega, beginning and end; but in between he will be deficient if he does not somehow cultivate what he has, and what he is to be, and that quite early on. It could be that those considered geniuses are worse off than those with ordinary abilities, for a genius can more easily than ordinary men be distorted and go astray."

"And yet," said Wilhelm, "will not a genius be able to save himself, to heal the wounds that he has inflicted on himself?"

"Not at all," said the stranger. "Or if so, then not very effectively. Nobody should ever believe that one's first youthful impressions can be counteracted. If a person is brought up in great freedom, surrounded by fine and beautiful objects, exposed to the company of good people, taught by excellent teachers to understand what he must first know in order to appreciate everything else, if he has learned what he will never need to unlearn, if his first actions are so guided that he will later be able to accomplish good things more easily and readily, without having to disaccustom himself from past tendencies, then he

will live a happier, better life than someone who expended his youthful energies in resistance and error. So much is talked and written about education; and yet I see very few people who understand what that simple, noble, all-embracing concept means, and who can translate it into action."

"That may well be true," said Wilhelm. "We are all so limited in our thinking, that all we want is to make the other person exactly like ourselves. Happy are those who are educated by Fate, each in his own way."

"Fate is a distinguished but costly tutor," the other replied with a smile. "I would rather entrust myself to the reason of a human tutor. Fate, for whose wisdom I have indeed the greatest respect, may well have in Chance a very clumsy means through which to operate. For Chance rarely seems to bring about exactly what Fate has decided."

"That seems to me a very strange way of thinking," Wilhelm replied.

"Nonsense!" said the stranger. "Almost everything that happens in the world, will confirm what I am saying. Doesn't many a train of events begin by displaying some lofty purpose and then end in sheer stupidity?"

"Surely, you're joking," said Wilhelm.

But the stranger continued: "And isn't the same true of the course of individual experience? Let's suppose that Fate has destined someone to become a good actor (and why shouldn't Fate provide us with good actors?), but unfortunately chance has it that as a child this young man became so addicted to the absurdities of the puppet theater that he finds stupidity not only tolerable but even interesting, and cannot regard these childish impressions, which never fade and continue to attract, from the proper perspective."

"What got you on to the puppet theater?" asked Wilhelm in a state of some alarm.

"It was just an arbitrary example. If you don't like it, we can take another. Suppose Fate has destined a man to be a great painter and chance has it that he spends his early years in dirty cottages, stables and barns: do you believe that he would ever rise to purity, nobility and freedom of soul? The more vigorously he took hold of all that was impure in his youth and tried to ennoble it, the more this would take its toll of him in later life. For while he was trying to eradicate these impurities, the hold that they exercised over him would become ever stronger. If a man has spent his early years in base company, he may later wish for better associates and yet yearn for those earlier companions, whose influence on him will always be colored by the recollection of the youthful pleasures which can rarely be regained."

The rest of the company had dispersed while this conversation was going on. Philine in particular had taken herself off right at the start. The two men took a side path and rejoined the others. Philine produced the forfeits which were redeemed in various ways, and while this was going on, the stranger delighted the company, and particularly the ladies, with the most amusing stories and his unabashed participation in the proceedings. And so the hours passed most pleasantly in joking, singing, kissing and other sorts of light-hearted amusements.

Chapter Ten

When they were about to start back, they looked around for the clergyman, but he had disappeared and was nowhere to be found. "That's not very nice of the man, who seemed otherwise to have such good manners, to leave people who have welcomed him so warmly, without even so much as saying goodbye," said Madame Melina. "I, for my part," said Laertes, "have been wondering all the time where I had seen that strange man before; and I meant to ask him, when we said goodbye." "I've had the same feeling," said Wilhelm, "and I certainly would not have let him go off without his telling us more about who and what he was. I must be very mistaken if I haven't spoken to him somewhere before." "And yet you could actually be wrong," said Philine. "This man gives one the impression of being someone familiar because he looks like a real person, not just anyone." "What does that mean?" said Laertes, "don't we also look like real persons?" "I know what I'm talking about," Philine replied, "and if you don't understand what I mean, then let it be. I'm not going to explain."

Two coaches drove up. Laertes was complimented for his thoughtfulness in ordering them. Philine took a seat next to Madame Melina, opposite Wilhelm, and the others fitted in where they could. Wilhelm's horse had been brought along too, so Laertes rode it back to town.

Once Philine had sat down, she started singing pretty little songs and switched the conversation to subjects which she insisted would make good plays. By this skillful maneuver she soon had our friend in the best of moods, and from his vast store of imaginative material he put together a whole play with acts, scenes, characters, and twists and turns of plot. It was decided to include some arias and songs and the words for these were composed. Philine, who was joining in everything, used some well-known melodies and sang them without further ado. She was having one of her best, her very best, days. She cheered up our friend by constant teasing, and he felt better than he had for a long time.

Since that cruel discovery which had torn him away from Mariane, Wilhelm had remained true to his vow to avoid the traps of all female embraces, to shun the fickle sex and keep his sorrow as well as his yearning and desire locked up in his own bosom. The conscientiousness with which he stuck to this resolve provided him with secret nourishment, but since his heart could not remain entirely unaffected, some kind of loving communication became a pressing need for him. So he went about once more in a youthful daze, joyfully watching every attractive object, and tolerant in his judgment of every pleasing person that met his eyes. It is easy to understand how dangerous such a frolicsome creature as Philine was bound to be for a man in his state of mind.

When they returned home, they found Wilhelm's room all set up for a reading, a table in the middle for the punch bowl.

At that time the latest thing in the theater was plays that were attracting great attention and approval from the public about medieval German knights. The old Blusterer had brought one of these, and it was decided that this should

be the subject of the reading. They all took their seats, and Wilhelm began to read. The knights in armor with their ancient fortresses, the honesty, loyalty, righteousness and especially the solid independence of the characters—all these were received with great acclaim. The reader gave of his very best, and the assembled company were transported by what they heard. Between the second and third acts the punch arrived in a huge bowl, and since there was a great deal of toasting and drinking in the play, what could be more natural than that the audience each time joined the heroes in clinking their glasses and singing the praises of the most favored personages in the play.

Everyone was enflamed by national fervor. Being Germans they were delighted to indulge poetically in a piece that expressed their own national character and played on their native soil. The vaults and cellars, ruined castles, moss, hollow trees, and especially the nocturnal gypsy scenes and secret tribunals had a stunning effect. Every one of the actors began to see himself in a helmet and cuirass, and the actresses envisioned themselves in big stiff collars proclaiming their Germanness to the public. Each of them decided immediately to assume a name from the play or from German history, and Madame Melina, who was pregnant, swore that if she bore a son, his name should be Adelbert, or if it were a daughter, she should be christened Mechthilde.

The applause grew louder and louder as the fifth act got underway, and toward the end, when the hero finally escaped his oppressor and the tyrant was punished, spirits were running so high that they all declared that they had never spent a better evening. Melina, excited by drink, was the most vociferous, and when the second punch bowl was emptied and midnight was approaching, Laertes swore full heartily that the lips of no other human being were worthy of drinking from these glasses, and with this assertion, threw his glass over his shoulder through the window on to the street. The others followed suit and despite the protestations of the innkeeper, who came running up, the punch bowl itself was broken into a thousand pieces so that, after such a festival, it should never be desecrated by base liquor. Philine, apparently not so intoxicated as the others (the two girls were stretched out in dubious positions on the sofa) took a malicious pleasure in instigating the others to make even more noise. Madame Melina recited a few sublime verses, and her husband, rather unpleasant while in his cups, began to criticize the poor preparation of the punch—he had quite different ideas on how to give a party. When Laertes told him to be quiet, he became more and more obnoxious and noisy, and finally Laertes threw the remains of the punch bowl at his head, which merely increased the general tumult and hubbub.

Meanwhile the night watch had arrived and insisted on being let into the house. Wilhelm, who had drunk little but was excited by his reading, had his work cut out, by words and money, and with some assistance from the innkeeper, to quieten people down and get the rest of the group home, despite the miserable state they were in. When he himself got back, he fell into his bed

without bothering to undress, overcome by sleepiness and in a thoroughly bad mood. Next morning when he opened his eyes and gloomily surveyed the mess and destruction of the previous evening, he felt thoroughly depressed at the sad results which a stimulating, spirited and well-intentioned work of literature had produced.

Chapter Eleven

After short reflection Wilhelm summoned the innkeeper and had the cost of the party and the damage put on his account. At the same time he was annoyed to learn that his horse had been so badly treated by Laertes, when he rode it home the previous day, that it was probably, as they say, "ill-shod," and the smith thought that there was little hope of making it serviceable again. On the other hand a greeting from Philine, who waved to him from her window, restored his spirits, and he went immediately to the nearest store to buy her a present to compensate for the powder knife she had given him. We must admit that he did not limit himself to equal compensation. For not only did he buy her a pair of delicate earrings, but also a hat, a scarf and various other things like those she had that first day thrown out of the carriage.

Madame Melina, who came to see him just when he was delivering these presents, found an occasion before dinner to speak to him seriously about his feelings for the girl, and he was utterly astonished at being, as he thought, so unjustly reproached. He declared most emphatically that it had never entered his head to start something with Philine, of whose mode of living he was well aware. He excused himself, as well as he could, for his friendly behavior to her, but this did not satisfy Madame Melina. On the contrary, she became increasingly ill-tempered when she noticed (as indeed she had to) that the flattery with which she herself had gained some degree of attention from Wilhelm, was insufficient to ward off the attacks of this younger, livelier creature who was more pleasantly endowed with nature's gifts.

At table they found Melina in a bad frame of mind, and Wilhelm was beginning to charge him with various pettinesses, when the host entered and announced that a harper was in the house. "You will certainly take pleasure in his playing and his songs: no one who hears him can fail to admire him and give him some reward."

"Let's not bother with him," replied Melina. "I'm not in the mood to listen to a droning musician and there are plenty of singers amongst us who are eager to earn a little." He accompanied these words with a malicious side-long glance at Philine. She got the point, and decided to annoy Melina by favoring the musician. So she turned to Wilhelm and said: "Why can't we listen to the man? Are we to do nothing to escape this miserable boredom?" Melina was about to answer and a vigorous quarrel would probably have

ensued if Wilhelm had not welcomed the man as he entered the room, and beckoned him towards them.

The strange appearance of the harper so astonished the company that he had already taken his seat before anyone had the heart to ask him anything or make some appropriate remark. His bald head was wreathed by a few grey hairs, and his large blue eyes peered gently from beneath heavy white eyebrows. He had a finely shaped nose, and a long white beard which, however, left his kindly mouth uncovered. His slender body was clothed from head to foot in a dark brown garment. He began to let his fingers glide gently over the strings of the harp, and the pleasing sounds he produced, immediately delighted the group.

“You sing, too, my dear old man, don’t you?” said Philine.

“Give us something to please heart and mind,” said Wilhelm. “An instrument should be just an accompaniment for the voice. Melodies, runs and passages without words and meaning seem to me like butterflies or colorful birds that swirl around before our eyes as we try to catch them and hold them. Whereas singing is like an airy spirit leading us heavenward and inducing our better self to follow.”

The old man first looked at Wilhelm, then cast his eyes upward, plucked the strings a few times, and began to sing. The ballad paid tribute to the art of song and praised the work of singers, urging all to respect and honor them. He presented the song with such vigor and sincerity, that he seemed to have composed it at that moment specially for this occasion. Wilhelm could hardly resist throwing his arms around him, but the fear of being laughed at kept him in his seat; the others were already muttering silly remarks and arguing whether the old man was a priest or a Jew.

When they asked him who had written the song, he gave an evasive answer. He did, however, assure them that he knew a large number of songs which he hoped might please them. Most of the company were in a cheerful mood, and even Melina was receptive in his own way. So while they were all gossiping and joking with each other, the harper intoned a splendid song in praise of the pleasures of being together. He sang of harmony and grace in limpid, mellifluous phrases; but, suddenly, the music became harsh, discordant and troubled when he expressed his disapproval of acrimonious indifference, short-sighted enmities and the dangers of strife—shackles of the mind that everyone listening was all too ready to cast off as the melody of his song soared upwards into praise of all peacemakers and of men’s joys at rediscovering each other.

When he had finished, Wilhelm exclaimed: “Whoever you may be, you have come into our midst bestowing blessings and new life on us, like a protective spirit. Please accept in return my thanks and respect. Be assured of our admiration; and be sure to tell us if you need anything.”

The old man fell silent, letting his fingers glide gently over the strings of the harp, then plucked them firmly, and sang this song:

“What do I hear outside the gate,
Resounding on the drawbridge?
Bring your song into the hall
That we may hear it better!”
Thus spake the king, the page-boy ran,
The boy returned, the king cried out:
“Bring the old man within here!”

“My greetings to you, noble lords,
My greetings, beauteous ladies!
The sky is studded full with stars,
And who can name them rightly?
Inside this splendid noble hall
Close up, o eyes; this is no time
To gape and feast on wonders.”

The singer pressed his eyelids close
And rich full tones he struck.
The knights looked proud and sternly on
The ladies bowed attentive heads.
The king took pleasure in the song,
And wishing to reward the bard,
A golden chain had straightway brought.

“O give me not that golden chain,
Bestow it on your warriors
Before whose bold and fierce visage
The enemy lances splinter.
Or give it to your chancellor,
That he may add its golden weight
To all his other burdens.

“My song soars freely like the bird’s
That sounds from out the branches.
And music coming from the throat
Rewards itself right richly.
If I may but one gift entreat,
Then bring me now of your best wine
A draught in purest goblet.”

The wine was brought; he drank it up,
The drink of sweet refreshment.
Thrice blessed he declared a house
Where gifts like this were trifles.
“And if you flourish, think of me,
And render unto God like thanks
As I for what you gave me.”

When the singer, having finished, grasped a glass of wine that had been poured for him and drank it down with a grateful glance at his benefactors, general delight spread throughout the company. They applauded and expressed the wish that the wine would be good for his health and strengthen his aged limbs. He sang a few more ballads and the mood of all those present became even livelier.

"Do you know the tune to 'The Shepherd Dressed Himself for the Dance,' old man?" asked Philine. "Yes, I do," he said. "If you would sing and act it, I will be glad to do my part."

Philine stood up and was ready. The old man began playing the melody and Philine sang the song—which we cannot repeat for our readers because they might well think it in bad taste, or even indecent.

Meanwhile they were all getting merrier and merrier, drinking more and more wine, and beginning to make a lot of noise. Since the bad effect of such behavior was still all too vividly present in our friend's mind, he tried to break up the proceedings, giving the old man a handsome recompense for his labors. The others contributed something as well, and let him go and rest, looking forward to that same evening and the pleasure of another demonstration of his skill.

After the Harper had left, Wilhelm said to Philine: "Your favorite song didn't seem to me to have either poetic or moral distinction. But if you were ever to perform something that was decent, with the same freshness, originality and charm, you would certainly be applauded."

"Yes," said Philine. "It must be quite pleasant to warm oneself on ice."

"Moreover," said Wilhelm, "this fellow puts many an actor to shame. Did you notice how perfect his dramatic expression was in those romances? There was more live presence in his singing than in our stiff stage personages. Many plays are performed as if they were simply being narrated, whereas music that tells stories really touches us."

"You are unfair," Laertes objected. "I don't pretend to be a great actor or a great singer. But this I do know: when music accompanies bodily movements, enlivening and at the same time controlling them, and the manner of delivery and the expression needed are indicated to me by the musical composer, then I am a totally different person from when I have to create these for myself, as I have to in spoken drama, inventing my own tempo, my own manner of speaking, and always liable to be disturbed in this by my fellow actors."

"For my part," said Melina, "I must say that in one respect this fellow has put us all to shame, and in a most important respect. The strength of his talent is shown by the use he puts it to. Whereas people like us may be uncertain where the next meal is coming from, he persuades us to share our meal with him. He knows how to extract from us the money that we might well use to improve our lot—and all that for one little song. It seems such a nice thing, to squander the money that could have been used to give us and others a stable livelihood."

This remark was not exactly a pleasant turn. Wilhelm, who was the real target of the reproach, answered with some heat, and Melina, who was by no means the subtlest of persons, was reduced to repeating his objections in harsh and direct terms. "Two whole weeks have gone by," he said, "since we looked at those props and costumes. We could have bought them for a modest amount. You gave me reason to hope that you would advance the necessary sum, but I cannot see that you have given the matter any further thought, let alone come to a decision. If you had taken action, we would already be in business. You said you intended to leave on a journey, but you haven't done so; and you don't seem to have been sparing of your money lately. At least there are certain persons who are apparently all too ready to provide you with opportunities of getting rid of it faster."

This reproach, which was not totally unjustified, hit home. Wilhelm made some rejoinder, with some passion, even vehemence, and took the occasion to leave, just as the company was about to break up, explaining in no uncertain terms that he did not wish to stay longer with such unfriendly and ungrateful people. He hurried away in a bad humor, and took himself off to a stone bench in front of the inn, not noticing that, partly for pleasure and partly from irritation, he had drunk more than usual.

Chapter Twelve

After a short while, as he sat there racked by disturbing thoughts, and staring straight in front of him, Philine came sauntering through the door singing, and sat down beside him, or rather on him, for she edged up so close, laid her head on his shoulders, played with his curly hair, stroked him and talked in the sweetest manner. She urged him to stay, not to leave her alone with the others who bored her to death; she simply could not continue to exist under the same roof with Melina and had therefore moved over to the inn where Wilhelm was staying.

He tried in vain to get rid of her, and make her understand that he could and would not stay here any longer. She continued her entreaties and unexpectedly put her arm around his neck and kissed him fervently.

"Are you crazy, Philine?" he said, trying to break loose. "Making a public street a witness to caresses that I have in no wise deserved! Let me go. I cannot and I will not remain here."

"I will keep hold of you and kiss you here in public until you give me your word that you will do what I want. I'm just dying with laughter," she went on. "After these intimacies people will think we've been married just four weeks, and husbands who observe this tender scene will praise me to their wives as a model of childlike, unabashed affection."

At that moment some people passed by, and she caressed him so tenderly that he was obliged, in order to avoid a scandal, to play the role of the patient

husband. Philine made faces at these people behind their backs and behaved so outrageously that he finally had to agree to stay on for today, tomorrow, and the next day.

"You're a regular stick-in-the-mud!" she said, letting go of him, "And I am a silly fool to waste such affection on you." She got up and sulkily walked away; then turned back laughing, and said: "But I suppose that's because I'm so crazy about you. I'm just going to fetch my knitting, so that I have something to do. Stay here, and let me find the stone man sitting on the same stone bench when I return."

Actually she was this time being quite unjust to him; for much as he tried to keep away from her, he would probably not have failed to respond to her caresses, if he had been alone with her in some leafy arbor. She for her part went into the house, darting a roguish glance at him as she left. He felt no particular compulsion to follow her; indeed her recent behavior had again been quite distasteful to him. And yet he got up from the bench, without really knowing why, and went after her.

He had just reached the door of the inn, when up came Melina, spoke to him in modest terms and apologized for those rather harsh words he had uttered during their recent dispute. "Don't think ill of me," he went on to say, "if in the state I'm in, I seem rather worried; but my concern for a wife, and perhaps soon for a child as well, prevents me from going on quietly from day to day, displaying pleasant emotions, as you are still able to do. Think it over, and if it is at all possible, do let me acquire those props. I won't be your debtor for long. And I will be eternally grateful to you."

Wilhelm, unwilling at that moment to be held up on the threshold when some irresistible attraction was impelling him towards Philine, spoke to him in a state of surprised distractedness and hasty generosity, saying: "If I can make you contented and happy, then I will not hesitate any longer. Go and arrange everything as seems fit. I am prepared to pay the money tonight or tomorrow morning." A handshake confirmed his promise, and he was delighted to see Melina hurry away down the street. But unfortunately he was prevented for a second time from entering the house, and this time in a more unpleasant manner.

A young man with a bundle on his back came rushing down the street towards Wilhelm who immediately recognized him as Friedrich. "I'm back!" he said, merrily rolling his big blue eyes and looking up at all the windows. "Where's Mademoiselle? Devil take me if I can live a day longer without seeing her!" The innkeeper, coming up, told him she was upstairs, and he leapt up the steps, leaving Wilhelm rooted to the spot. He would gladly have pulled the boy back by his hair, but fierce jealousy cramped the flow of his spirits and of his thinking, and once he had recovered from this paralysis he felt more uneasy and more uncomfortable than ever before.

He went to his room, and there found Mignon occupied in writing. The child had for some time been applying herself diligently to writing down

everything that she knew by heart, and giving it to her friend and master to correct. She was tireless at what she was doing, and did it quite well except that the letters were uneven and the lines not straight. In this too her body seemed to be at variance with her mind. Wilhelm, who, when he was at peace with himself, took great pleasure in the child's attentiveness, paid on this occasion little attention to what she showed him. She felt this and was especially distressed because she thought that this time she had done her work quite well.

Wilhelm was so restless that he walked up and down the corridors and back to the door of the house. A horseman came riding up, good-looking and sprightly, though quite mature in years. The innkeeper rushed up and greeted him as an old friend, saying: "Well, Mr. Stablemaster, are we once more to have the pleasure of your company?" "I'm just stopping here to feed my horses, then I really must ride to the estate to see that things are in order. Time is pressing, because the count is arriving tomorrow with his wife and they will be staying for a while in order to receive the Prince of *** and entertain him as best they can. The prince will probably set up headquarters in this neighborhood." "What a pity that you can't stay with us," said the innkeeper, "for we have interesting people in the house." A groom came and took the stablemaster's horse, while he was conversing with the innkeeper in the doorway and casting sidelong glances at Wilhelm.

When Wilhelm noticed that they were talking about him, he left and walked up and down the nearby streets.

Chapter Thirteen

Wilhelm was so restless and ill-tempered that he decided to look up the Harper in the hope that his music might dispel the evil spirits. He inquired where he lived and was directed to a shabby inn in a remote part of the town, and then up a flight of stairs to an attic room from which came the sweet sounds of the harp. The somber, deeply moving music was accompanied by anguished melancholy singing. Wilhelm crept up to the door. The old man was rhapsodizing, repeating stanzas, half singing, half reciting, and then, after a short while, Wilhelm heard something like this:

Who never with hot tears ate his bread,
Who never through the nighttime hours
Sat weeping in sorrow on his bed,
He does not know you, Heavenly Powers.

You lead us into life, ordain
That wretches pile up guilt from birth,
And then you yield them up to pain;
For all guilt is atoned on earth.

This mournful, heartfelt lament affected the listener deeply. It seemed to him as if the old man was at times prevented by tears from continuing to sing, and the strings of the harp resounded until the voice came in again, softly and with broken sounds. Wilhelm stood by the door, deeply moved, his own constricted heart opened up by the immense grief of the stranger. He was overcome by such fellow feeling that he did not, could not, restrain the tears brought to his eyes by the old man's bitter lamentation. The sorrows oppressing his heart all came out into the open. He abandoned himself completely to them, pushed open the door, and stood facing the old man who was sitting on his wretched bed, the only piece of furniture in the miserable room.

"Oh what feelings you have aroused in me, good old man!" he cried. "You have released everything that was hidden in my heart. But don't let me disturb you. Go on—and while you are soothing your own pains, you will make a friend happy." The old man was about to stand up and say something, but Wilhelm kept him from doing this. He had noticed at noon that the Harper did not speak readily. Instead Wilhelm sat down beside him on the straw sack that was his bed.

The old man dried his tears and asked with a friendly smile: "Why did you come? I was intending to see you this evening." "It's quieter here," Wilhelm replied. "Sing me whatever you have a mind to, whatever you're in a mood for—and just pretend I'm not here. It seems to me that today nothing can go wrong for you. I think you are very fortunate to be able to occupy yourself so pleasantly in your solitude, and, since you are a stranger everywhere, to find your dearest friend in your own heart."

The old man looked down at the strings of his harp, his fingers gliding softly over them, and then started to sing:

He who turns to solitude
Is soon, alas! alone.
Life comes to each, love comes to each,
And leaves him to his pain.
Oh leave me to my torment here,
And if I dwell in solitude
I'll never be alone.

A lover softly creeps and listens
Whether she is alone.
And so come creeping, day and night,
My sorrow and my pain
To me in all my solitude,
And in my solitary grave
At last leave me alone.

We could expend a great number of words and still not be able to convey the charm of the extraordinary conversation which our friend had with the curious stranger. The old man responded, as though agreeing with everything the

young man said, by producing music that evoked all sorts of similar feelings and opened up the full range of the imagination.

Anyone who has been present at an assembly of pious people seeking a degree of purer, richer, more spiritual edification than is to be found within the church, will have some idea of the nature of this encounter. He will recall how the leader will adapt to what he is saying the verse of some hymn which directs the mind to where he himself is tending in his homily. Then someone in the group will break in with a different tune, a verse from another hymn. Then a third person will add something from still another hymn, with the result that the community of ideas in these various hymns is evoked, and each individual passage by reason of these associations takes on a new light, as if it had just been composed. A new synthesis is evolved out of familiar ideas and hymns and verses for this particular audience, in the enjoyment of which they are edified, quickened and fortified. In a similar way the old man wove together for his guest well known and unknown songs and snatches, and thereby set moving a complex of recent or more remote feelings, waking and slumbering, pleasant and painful emotions, from which only good could be expected for our friend in his present state.

Chapter Fourteen

On his way back Wilhelm did indeed begin to reflect more deeply on his present situation, and by the time he reached home, he had resolved to extricate himself from it. The innkeeper told him in confidence that Philine had made a new conquest in the person of the duke's stablemaster, and, having attended to his duties at the estate, this man had returned very quickly and up in her room was enjoying a good dinner with Philine.

At this very moment Melina arrived with a notary, and both went to Wilhelm's room, where Wilhelm somewhat reluctantly fulfilled his promise to Melina. He gave him a draft in the amount of three hundred thalers, which Melina immediately handed to the notary, receiving in exchange a document confirming the sale of all the theatrical effects which would early next day be handed over to Melina.

Just after the others had left, Wilhelm heard a terrible cry from somewhere in the house. It was a young person's voice, angry and threatening, and constantly interrupted by weeping and moaning. Then down the stairs it came, past his room, out on to the square. Curiosity impelled him to go downstairs and look: he found Friedrich in a state of frenzy. The boy was weeping, stamping, grinding his teeth, clenching his fists, and almost beside himself with anger and dismay. Mignon stood looking at him with amazement, and the innkeeper offered some sort of an explanation.

He said that on his return the boy had been cheerful and content, since Philine treated him well, and had gone around singing and dancing until the

time when the stablemaster made her acquaintance. Since then—half boy and half man that he was—he had shown outbursts of temper by slamming doors and running up and down stairs. Philine had ordered him to wait at the table that evening, and at this he became even more sulky and defiant, so that finally instead of putting a dish of stew on the table he threw it between Mademoiselle and her guest, who were sitting quite close to each other. Whereupon the man gave him a couple of mighty clouts and threw him out. The innkeeper himself had been obliged to clean up the two; their clothes were in a sorry state.

When the boy saw the results of his revenge he burst out laughing while tears continued to roll down his cheeks. For a time he was intensely happy, but when he remembered the insult he had suffered from someone bigger than himself, he started howling again and threatening.

Pensively and somewhat disconcertedly Wilhelm observed this whole scene. What he saw was an exaggerated display of his own self, for he too had been consumed by fierce jealousy, and if his sense of propriety had not prevented him, he too would have indulged his wildest fancies, gleefully and maliciously harmed his beloved, and challenged his rival. He would gladly have obliterated everybody who seemed to be there just to exasperate him.

Laertes joined them, having also heard what had happened. He was rogue enough to encourage Friedrich when the angry boy asserted that the stablemaster would have to fight a duel with him, for he, Friedrich, had never taken insults. And if the fellow refused, he would take his revenge in some other way. Laertes was really in his element. He solemnly went upstairs and challenged the stablemaster in the boy's name. "That's amusing," said the man, "I hadn't expected such entertainment this evening." They went downstairs, Philine following them. "My boy," said the stablemaster to Friedrich, "you're a fine fellow and I won't refuse to fight with you. But since our ages and skills are so unequal that the whole affair will be somewhat bizarre, I propose rapiers instead of other weapons. Let's mark the buttons with chalk and whoever scores the most hits on the other's jacket shall be declared the winner and be treated to the best wine in town."

Laertes decided to accept this proposal, and Friedrich abode by his master's decision. The rapiers were brought. Philine sat down with her knitting, watching the two combatants with complete composure.

The stablemaster, who was a very good fencer, was obliging enough to spare his opponent by letting him achieve several chalk marks on his jacket, whereupon they embraced and the wine was brought in. The man wanted to know about Friedrich's home and his life, and Friedrich for his part spun a tale he had often told, which we will reserve for some other occasion.

The duel was for Wilhelm an additional externalization of his own feelings. He couldn't deny that he himself would have liked to direct a rapier, or still better, a sword, at the stablemaster, although he soon observed that the man was a far better fencer than he was. But he did not deign to cast on Philine a single

glance, avoided anything that might betray his feelings, and once he had drunk several times to the health of the combatants, he hurried up to his room. There he was overcome by a host of unpleasant thoughts.

He recalled the time when his spirit was uplifted by an eager surge of boundless activity, full of hope and promise, a striving that knew no limits, swimming in the enjoyment of everything. But now, as he realized, he had fallen into a state of continual floundering, sipping at life instead of drinking deeply as before. He could not perceive clearly that there was an irresistible yearning which nature had imposed on him as a law of his being, and that this was being stimulated, but only half satisfied, and ultimately frustrated by circumstance.

It was therefore not surprising, whenever he considered his condition and his desire to work himself out of it, that he became completely confused. It was not right that, because of his friendship with Laertes, his attraction to Philine and his concern for Mignon, he should stay longer than was reasonable with these people in a place where he could foster his prime desire, fulfil it, so to speak, on the side, and still go on dreaming as before, without really setting himself a definite goal. He had thought to have enough strength to break loose from this situation, and leave. But now just a few moments ago he had entered on a business deal with Melina and had come to know the mysterious harper whose secret he was so anxious to discover. But, after much thinking, he decided that not even this should stop him from leaving—or at least he thought he had so decided. “I must leave,” he cried out. “I want to leave.” In a state of great agitation he threw himself into a chair. Mignon came into the room and asked if she might fix his hair for him. She came in very quietly; his curtness to her earlier that day had hurt her deeply.

There is nothing more moving than when a secretly nourished love and silently strengthened devotion suddenly finds itself face to face with the object that has hitherto been unworthy of its affection, but now at least realizes it. The bud that had been tightly closed for so long was ready to open, and Wilhelm’s heart was ready to receive it.

She stood before him and saw his unrest.—“Master!” she said, “If you are unhappy, what shall become of Mignon?” “Dear creature,” he said, grasping her hands, “you too are part of my sorrow. I must leave this place.”—She looked into his eyes, which were dimmed with tears, and then threw herself on her knees before him. He held her hands; she laid her head on his knees and stayed quite still. He stroked her hair like a friend. She did not move. Suddenly he felt her twitching, a movement which began quite gently and then increased, spreading through all her limbs. “What is it, Mignon?” he cried. “What is the matter with you?” She raised her head, looked at him, then put her hand to her heart as if to stop some pain. He lifted her up and she fell onto his lap. He pressed her to him and kissed her. She did not respond, neither with her hands nor with any other movement. She kept clutching her heart and suddenly let out a cry which was accompanied by convulsive movements of her body. She jumped up, and then immediately fell down in front of him, as

if every limb of her body were broken. It was a terrifying sight. "My child," he said, lifting her up and gripping her with his arms, "what is it?" — But the convulsions persisted, spreading from the heart into her dangling limbs. She was just hanging in his arms. He clasped her to his heart and covered her with tears. Suddenly she seemed taut again, like someone experiencing great bodily pain. All her limbs became alive again, and with renewed strength she threw herself around his neck, like a lock that springs shut, while a deep cleft opened up inside her and a flood of tears poured from her closed eyes on to his breast. He held her close. She wept tears such as no tongue can describe. Her long hair hung loosely around her as she wept, and her whole being seemed to be dissolving into a steady flood of tears. Her rigid limbs unfroze, her whole inner self poured itself out, and in the confusion of the moment Wilhelm feared that she might melt away in his arms so that nothing of her would remain. He grasped her more and more firmly to himself. "My child!" he cried, "My child! You are mine. Let that console you. You are mine! I will keep you. I will never leave you!" — Her tears continued. Finally she raised her head, and a gentle serenity lit up her face. — "My father!" she cried. "You will never leave me! You will be my father! — I am your child!"

From outside the door came the soft sounds of the harp. The old man was singing his most heartfelt songs, as an evening offering to his friend who, holding his child ever closer in his arms, experienced a feeling of the most perfect, indescribable bliss.

Book Three

Chapter One

Know you the land where lemon blossoms blow,
And through dark leaves the golden oranges glow,
A gentle breeze wafts from an azure sky,
The myrtle's still, the laurel tree grows high—
You know it, yes? Oh there, oh there
With you, O my beloved, would I fare.

Know you the house? Roof pillars over it,
The chambers shining and the hall bright-lit,
The marble figures gaze at me in rue:
“You poor poor child, what have they done to you?”
You know it, yes? Oh there, oh there,
With you, O my protector, would I fare.

Know you the mountain and its cloudy trails?
The mule picks out its path through misty veils,
The dragon's ancient brood haunts caverns here,
The cliff drops straight, the stream above falls sheer.
You know it, yes? Oh there, oh there
Our path goes on! There, Father, let us fare!

When Wilhelm looked around for Mignon the next morning he could not find her; but he heard that she had gone out early with Melina, who had left to fetch the costumes and other props.

Some hours later he recognized music outside his door, and assumed at first that this was the Harper; but he then heard the sound of a zither and the voice that began to sing was Mignon's. He opened the door for Mignon who came in and sang the song we have just communicated. The melody and the expression pleased Wilhelm greatly, though he could not make out all the words. So he asked her to repeat it, and explain it; then he wrote it down and translated it into German. He found, however, that he could not even approximate the originality of the phrases, and the childlike innocence of the style was lost when the broken language was smoothed over and the disconnectedness removed. The charm of the melody was also quite unique.

She intoned each verse with a certain solemn grandeur, as if she were drawing attention to something unusual and imparting something of importance. When she reached the third line, the melody became more somber; the words "You know it, yes?" were given weightiness and mystery, the "Oh there, oh there!" was suffused with longing, and she modified the phrase "Let us fare!" each time it was repeated, so that one time it was entreating and urging, the next time pressing and full of promise.

When she had finished the song a second time she paused, looked straight at Wilhelm, and asked: "Do you know that land?" "It must be Italy," Wilhelm replied. "Where did you get the song?" "Italy!" said Mignon in a meaningful tone; "if you go to Italy, take me with you. I'm freezing here." "Have you ever been there?" asked Wilhelm; but the child kept silent and not one word more could be elicited from her.

Melina, who came in, saw the zither and was delighted that it had been put into such good shape. It had been part of the props. Mignon had asked for it that morning, the Harper had restrung it, and the child showed a talent that they had not known about.

Melina had already taken possession of the whole wardrobe. Some members of the town council promised to get him a permit to put on performances. He was overjoyed and his face shone when he returned. He seemed a different person: gentle, polite to everyone, even obliging and considerate. He hoped he would be lucky as he was now able to give work to his friends who had been idle for quite a while and at a loss what to do. He could give them a fixed engagement for a time, though he regretted that at first he could not pay those excellent actors that fate had brought his way in a manner consonant with their ability and talents; he first had to settle his debt to their generous friend Wilhelm.

"I cannot tell you what a display of friendship this is on your part that enables me to become the director of a theater. For when I first met you, I was in a very strange position. You will recall that at our first meeting I expressed my strong antipathy to the theater, but when I got married, I had to look around for an engagement, out of love for my wife who hoped thereby to find satisfaction and appreciation. I couldn't find anything, at least nothing lasting, but I did have the good fortune to meet several officials who sometimes could use someone who knew how to wield a pen, understood French and was experienced in bookkeeping. And so for a while things went quite well for me. I was fairly well paid, bought various things and my standard of living was quite respectable. But the commissions I had from my employers began to peter out, there was no hope of permanent support, and my wife was so desperately anxious to go onto the stage—unfortunately at a time when, because of her pregnancy, she could not expect to make the best impression on the public. But now I hope that the company which, thanks to your help, I am to direct, will be a good start for me and mine, and to you I will owe my future fortune, whatever it may turn out to be."

Wilhelm listened to these words with satisfaction, and all the actors were fairly content with what their new director had said, were secretly delighted at having secured an engagement so soon, and inclined to make do for the start with a small wage. Most of them considered what they were so unexpectedly being offered as a supplement they could not have counted on. Melina used this situation to talk to each of them individually, and to use every argument to persuade them that it was in their interests to sign their contracts without delay. As a result they gave little thought to this new arrangement, feeling sufficiently safeguarded by being able to terminate it any time at six weeks' notice.

The conditions of the agreement were then spelled out in proper form, and Melina was already thinking about what plays should be put on first in order to capture the public's interest. At this very moment a messenger came for the stablemaster, announcing the impending arrival of the count and countess and that he had been told to bring out the horses that he had in his charge.

Soon a heavily loaded carriage drew up in front of the inn. Two servants jumped down from the box of the coach, and Philine, true to character, was the first to be at hand in the doorway. "Who is that?" asked the countess as she went into the inn. "An actress, and at your Grace's service," the roguish girl replied, putting on a sober face, curtsying modestly, and kissing the lady's skirt. The count saw several people standing around, who also claimed to be actors and inquired how large the company was, where they had last performed, and who their director was. "If they are French," he said to his wife, "we might delight the prince with an unexpected pleasure by providing his favorite form of entertainment in our own house."

"Even if these people are unfortunately only Germans," said the countess, "we still might seriously think of letting them perform at the castle while the prince is there. They must have acquired some skill. The best way of entertaining a large number of people is to have some theater, and the baron will coach them."

With these words they went up the stairs and Melina introduced himself as the director. "Call your people together and present them to me," said the count, "so that I can see what they're like. I also want to see a list of the plays they would be ready to do."

Melina made a deep bow, hurried out of the room and came back with the actors. They pushed and shoved each other in all directions, some presenting themselves poorly as they hoped to please, and others no better because they adopted a silly manner. Philine showed great respect to the countess, who was extremely gracious and friendly, and the count took a good look at the others. He asked all of them what their specialties were, and told Melina that he should insist on maintaining set roles, an opinion that Melina accepted with the greatest respect.

The count then told each of them what he or she should particularly work at, what needed improvement in figure and posture, instructing them in what

Germans always lack and thereby revealing such unusual knowledge of these matters, that they all stood there in deep humility before such a distinguished connoisseur and lofty patron, hardly daring to breathe in his presence.

"Who's that fellow over there in the corner?" the count asked, staring at someone who had not yet been presented to him, and a thin man in a shabby coat with patches on the elbows and a wretched wig on this humble fellow's head came over to him. This was the man, familiar to us from the previous Book as Philine's favorite, who usually played pedants, teachers and poets, and took on those roles where someone has to be beaten or doused with water. He had acquired a rather unctuous, nervous, ridiculous manner of bowing, and his halting speech, so well suited to the roles he played, always made the spectators laugh, so that he was still considered a useful member of the troupe, and was always ready to take on an assignment and to please. He came up to the count, bowed in his own special way, and answered all his questions about the gestures that he employed in his roles. The count observed him with pleasure and attention, and then, after some reflection, he said to his wife: "Just look at that man, my dear. I guarantee he's a good actor, or could become one." The fellow was so overjoyed at this that he made the stupidest bow and the count just burst out laughing, and said: "This man is excellent. I bet he could play anything he has a mind to, and it's a shame that he hasn't been given better parts."

It was rather irritating for the others that the Pedant should be singled out, but Melina did not take it to heart. He agreed wholeheartedly with the count, and added in a tone of the greatest respect: "Yes, indeed. All he and some of the others have lacked, is the encouragement of someone as knowledgeable as your Excellency."

"Is this the whole company?" the count asked. "A few of them aren't here just now," Melina shrewdly replied, "but we could soon get some others from nearby to make up the complement, if we had the necessary funds." Meanwhile Philine was saying to the countess: "There's quite a handsome young man upstairs who would do well as *jeune premier*." "Why can't we see him?" the countess asked. "I'll go fetch him," said Philine and hurried out of the door.

She found Wilhelm still occupied with Mignon, but she persuaded him to go downstairs with her. He followed her somewhat unwillingly, but with some curiosity, for having heard mention of persons of high station, he was anxious to become acquainted with them. He walked into the room and his eyes immediately encountered those of the countess directed at him. Philine took him to the lady whilst the count was busy with the others. Wilhelm bowed to the countess and answered with some confusion the questions this charming lady addressed to him. Her beauty, her youthful grace, her elegance and refinement of manner made the most pleasing impression on him, all the more so because a certain shyness—even embarrassment—was in her words and gestures. He was also introduced to the count, who paid little atten-

tion to him, and instead walked up to the window with his wife and seemed to be asking her about something. It was apparent that her opinion was entirely in agreement with his. She seemed to be urging him eagerly to follow his own inclinations.

He came back to the group and said: "I can't stay here any longer at the moment, but I will send a friend of mine to you, and if you make reasonable conditions and work really hard, I am disposed to let you play at the castle." They all expressed their delight at this, especially Philine, who ardently kissed the hands of the countess. "Now listen, little one," the lady said, patting the cheeks of the flighty girl, "Listen, my child. You come back to me, and I will keep my promise. But you must be better dressed." Philine apologized for having so little to spend on her wardrobe, and the countess immediately ordered one of her ladies-in-waiting to bring up an English hat and a silk scarf, which could easily be taken out from the luggage. The countess began to dress up Philine, who continued behaving delightfully with a hypocritical expression of innocence on her face.

The count escorted his wife down the stairs. She greeted the whole company in passing, turning again to Wilhelm, and finally saying, in the most gracious manner: "We'll see each other again soon."

These favorable prospects brought new life to the whole company. Everyone began to talk about his or her hopes and wishes, the ideas each had in his head, the roles they would play and the applause they would receive. Melina began to think of how he could quickly make some money by a few performances to the townsfolk, which would at the same time get the actors in trim. Others went into the kitchen to order a better meal than they had been used to.

Chapter Two

A few days later the baron arrived and was received by Melina with some trepidation. The count had described him as a connoisseur, and it was to be feared that he would soon discover the deficiencies of the little company and realize that this was not an organized troupe, because they could hardly get together an adequate cast for any play. But both the director and the other members were relieved to discover in the baron a man with great affection for the native theater, a man for whom every actor and any company was a source of welcome pleasure. He greeted them all ceremoniously, and expressed his delight at having the good fortune to come so unexpectedly into contact with German theater and being able to introduce the national muses into the castle of his relatives. Thereupon he drew from out of his pocket a notebook from which Melina hoped to learn the terms of their engagement; but it turned out to be something quite different. For the baron asked them to listen carefully to a play he had himself composed and wished them to perform. They

gathered round, delighted at the prospect of winning the favor of such an important person at such little cost, although, noticing the length of the manuscript, they feared they were in for quite a long sitting. Which indeed it turned out to be. The play was in five acts and was one of those which seem never to end.

The hero was a noble, virtuous, generous but unappreciated and persecuted man, who finally won out over his adversaries, dispensing the finest poetic justice, but not pardoning them immediately.

During the reading of the play all of the actors had ample opportunity to think about themselves and move from inadequacy into a state of jubilant self-satisfaction and radiant future prospects. Those who did not find in it a suitable role for themselves, decided that it was a bad play, and its author untalented; others, noticing a passage which would earn them acclaim, to the great satisfaction of the author, followed the reading with appreciation.

The business end of things was soon settled. Melina succeeded in negotiating with the baron a contract that was favorable to him, and did not reveal its terms to the other actors.

He spoke to the baron in passing about Wilhelm, saying that he was well suited to be a writer of plays and had no mean acting talent. The baron treated Wilhelm immediately as a colleague, and Wilhelm recited for him some brief pieces that, with a few other relics, had by chance survived from the conflagration that had consumed most of his manuscripts. The baron praised the plays and Wilhelm's delivery, taking for granted that Wilhelm would come to the castle with the others, and promising them all, as he left, the best reception, comfortable accommodation, good food, appreciation and rewards; and Melina guaranteed them a fixed amount of pocket money.

It is easy to imagine the good mood that prevailed amongst the actors after this visit. Instead of an anxious, lowly existence, they saw themselves about to enter on a life of honor and comfort. They amused themselves by calculating all this in advance, and dismissed as improper the idea of keeping any money in their pockets.

Wilhelm considered whether he should go with them to the castle or not, and decided that there were several good reasons to do so. Melina hoped by this advantageous engagement to repay part of what he had borrowed, and Wilhelm, always eager to meet people, did not wish to forego the opportunity of getting to know the "world" from which he hoped to derive insights on life, on himself and on art. Also he did not dare admit how much he wished to become better acquainted with the beautiful countess. He tried to persuade himself of the great advantages that would accrue to him by closer contact with the world of sophistication and wealth. He thought about the count and countess and the baron, the confidence, grace, and ease of their manner, and, once he was alone, he broke out into words of rapture: "Thrice happy and praiseworthy are those whose high birth elevates them above the lower classes of humanity. They never—not even occasionally—need to labor under condi-

tions which afflict so many good people with constant anxiety their whole life long. From their higher position, their view must be clear-sighted, and every step they take in life light-footed. By their birth they are, so to speak, in a ship that, in the journey we all must undertake, can profit from favorable winds and can wait till unfavorable ones have passed, whereas we others swim, struggling for our lives, without much help from favorable winds, and perishing in rapidly exhausted energy. What comfort and ease an inherited income provides! How well a business flourishes if it is based on fixed capital, so that every faulty transaction need not result in inactivity! Who can judge the value or lack of value of earthly goods better than someone who has been able to enjoy these from early years! Who can apply his mind earlier to what is necessary, useful and true than he who becomes aware of errors at an age when he still has sufficient energy to begin a new life."

Thus did our friend ascribe good fortune to those who dwell high up; but also to those who approach such lofty realms, and find sustenance there. He praised his guiding spirit for leading him upward on this path.

Meanwhile Melina, having racked his brains to distribute type roles to the various members of the company (as the count wanted and he himself believed desirable), and specifying to each of them what their particular contribution would be, was very satisfied to discover, when he had finally worked this out, that every member of the little company was prepared to take on this or that role. Laertes usually took the part of lovers and Philine that of the maids. The two young girls divided the innocent and the sentimental sweethearts between them, and the old Blusterer played himself and that was best of all. Melina thought he could play the part of the gentleman; his wife, to her great chagrin, had to take on the young women's parts, even that of the affectionate mothers. And because there were not many pedants or poets ridiculed in modern plays the count's favorite had to play presidents and ministers because these were usually represented as wicked and in the fifth act came to a bad end. As chamberlain or such like Melina gladly suffered the insults that trusty German gentlemen were subjected to in many popular plays of the time, because in such scenes he could dress up and affect the airs of a courtier, which he believed he had at his command.

Before long, more actors began to arrive from different parts of the country, and were taken on without much testing and without any special conditions. Several times Melina tried in vain to persuade Wilhelm to play the *jeune premier*. Wilhelm took great interest in all the preparations, although the new director did not give him much credit for his trouble. Melina believed that, with his honorific position he had assumed greater powers of insight. One of his favorite occupations was to make cuts to reduce all plays to a suitable length, without any other considerations. He was encouraged in this by the fact that the public was well satisfied, and those with taste declared that the theater at the court was nothing like as well established as theirs.

Chapter Three

The time finally came to move to the count's castle. Coaches and carriages were awaited to transport the whole company. Various arguments ensued as to who should ride with whom and where everybody should sit. The order and arrangement was eventually worked out with some difficulty but little effect. Fewer vehicles than had been expected came at the appointed hour, and everyone had to make do. The baron, following on horseback, said the reason was that at the castle everything was in a state of confusion, not merely because the prince was to arrive several days early, but also because unexpected visitors had already arrived. They were getting short of space, so the actors could not be so well housed as they had been promised, the baron was sorry about that.

They distributed themselves as best they could in the carriages, and since the weather was passable and the castle was not a great distance away, the sprightlier ones preferred to walk rather than wait for the coaches to come back to fetch them. The caravan left with shouts of joy and for the first time not worrying how the innkeeper was to be paid. The count's castle hovered before their minds like a fairy palace, they were the happiest and luckiest people on earth, and everyone associated this day in his thoughts with what he conceived to be fortune, honor and well-being.

Even unexpected heavy rain did not divert their minds from such pleasant thoughts; but when it kept up and got steadily worse, many of them did feel a certain discomfort. Night began to fall and nothing was more welcome than the sight of the count's residence, with lights on every floor, gleaming towards them from a hill, so that they could count the windows. As they came nearer they could see that even the side-tracts were brightly illuminated. Each of them wondered which would be his quarters, and most of them would have been quite satisfied with a small room under the roof or on the side.

They drove through the village past an inn. Wilhelm called a halt so that he could alight, but was told that there was absolutely no room at all there. The count had taken over the whole inn because those unexpected guests had arrived, and at every door the name of the guest occupying it, was written in chalk. And so our friend was obliged, against his will, to drive with the others into the castle courtyard.

They saw cooks busy around the kitchen fires in one of the side-buildings, and this cheered them up considerably. Servants bearing lighted candles came running up to the staircase of the main building, and our travelers' spirits bubbled over in anticipation. But how amazed were they when this reception dissolved into a torrent of abuse! The servants yelled at the coachmen for coming in on this side; they should turn around and go to the old part of the castle—there was no room here for guests! This unfriendly and unexpected reception was accompanied by jeering remarks; they laughed to see the newcomers exposed once again to the rain because of this mistake. It was still pouring,

there were no stars in the sky, and the whole company was now dragged down a bumpy road between two walls into the old castle, which had stood unoccupied since the count's father had built the new one. The carriages came to a halt in the courtyard or in the long arched gateway, and the drivers from the village unharnessed the horses and rode home.

Since no one came forward to welcome them, they all got out, called for assistance, then went to look for it, but without any results. Everything remained dark and silent. The wind blew through the open gate, and the old turrets and courts, hardly visible in the darkness, made a gruesome effect. Everybody was freezing and shuddering, the women trembling, the children crying. Their impatience was mounting with every moment, for this sudden change of fortune had caught them quite unawares and completely robbed them of their composure.

They continued to wait for someone to open the doors for them, mistaking the sound of the rain and the wind for the steps of an approaching steward, and there they stayed for quite a long time, losing their tempers but doing nothing about their situation. It never occurred to any of them to go over to the new castle and ask for help from some sympathetic soul. They could not understand where their friend the baron was and were in an exceedingly troublesome state.

At last some people did arrive, and were recognized by their voices as those who had followed the carriages on foot. They reported that the baron had fallen from his horse and seriously hurt his foot. They too had gone first to the new castle and been angrily told to come here.

The whole company was completely perplexed; discussed what to do and came to no decision. At last a light approached from a distance, and they gave a sign of relief; but their hopes of deliverance were soon dashed when they saw that this was the count's stablemaster with a groom holding a lantern to light his path. The stablemaster inquired eagerly after Mademoiselle Philine; she detached herself from the others, and he offered to escort her to the new castle, where a place was reserved for her with the countess's ladies-in-waiting. Without a moment's hesitation she accepted his offer, grasped his arm and, leaving her trunk in the care of the others, was about to rush off with him, when their path was barred and the stablemaster bombarded with questions and requests, so that, in order to escape with his beloved, he had to promise them everything and assured them that the castle would soon be opened up and they themselves well lodged. They watched his lantern disappear from sight, and waited a long time for another light and new hope to appear; but nothing came. Then finally, after much waiting, grumbling and cursing, they saw it coming, and were again consoled and hopeful.

An old servant opened the door of the old building, and they all rushed inside. Each attended to his own possessions, unloading them and bringing them into the house. Most of the things, like the owners themselves, were soaked through. There was only one light, so things went very slowly, with a

good deal of shoving, stumbling and falling down. They asked for more lights, they asked for a fire. The uncommunicative servant was obliged to leave his lantern for them, went away, and did not come back.

Then they began to search through the house. The doors of all the rooms were standing open. There were massive stoves, tapestry wallcoverings and inlaid floors as reminders of past splendor, but no ordinary household furniture, no tables, no chairs, no mirrors, just a few huge empty bedsteads, stripped of necessities as well as decoration. So they used their wet boxes and knapsacks as seats; some of our tired wanderers even stretched out on the floor. Wilhelm seated himself on some steps, with Mignon's head on his knees. She was restless, and when he asked her what was wrong, she said, "I'm hungry!" He found that he had nothing to give her, and the rest of the company had already used up their provisions; so he had to leave the poor creature hungry. He had been uninvolved in what was going on and meditative, vexed and angry that he had not stuck to his own intention and stayed at the inn, even if he had to sleep on the attic floor.

The others all behaved in accordance with their character. Some of them brought down a pile of old wood, lugged it into one of the huge fireplaces in the room, and set it alight with shouts of glee. But unfortunately their hope of drying and warming themselves was to be frustrated by the fact that this particular fireplace was purely ornamental and the chimney had been bricked up, so that the smoke came pouring back into the rooms, while the wood was so dry that it crackled into flames and shot out into the room, fanned by the draught through the broken windowpanes and darting hither and thither, so that it was feared that the whole castle might catch on fire. They separated the burning wood, stamped on it, doused it, and that made even more smoke. The whole situation became unbearable and everyone was by now quite desperate.

Wilhelm had retreated from the smoke into a distant room. Mignon followed him, bringing with her a well-dressed servant carrying a brightly burning pair of candles who turned to Wilhelm and said, handing him a fine porcelain dish of fruit and sweetmeats: "The young lady over there sends you these with the request that you join the company." He then added somewhat frivolously: "She asked me to tell you that everything is fine with her, and that she would like to share her satisfaction with her friends." Nothing could have surprised Wilhelm more than this message: since the episode on the stone bench he had treated Philine with open scorn, quite determined never to have anything more to do with her. He was just about to return the gift when he caught an imploring expression on Mignon's face; so he sent back his thanks on Mignon's behalf, but for himself firmly declined the invitation. He asked the servingman to pay some attention to the needs of the others, and inquired after the baron. He was told that the baron was confined to his bed, and, so far as he knew, had given orders to someone else to look after the needs of the actors who were so miserably housed.

The man went away, leaving Wilhelm one of his candles which, for lack of a chandelier, he had to fix on one of the windowsills, so that at least all four walls of the room were illuminated as he pursued his various thoughts. But it still took a long time before arrangements were made so that the guests could go to their rest. More candles were brought in, though without snuffers, then some chairs, then, one hour later, blankets, then pillows (all wet), and it was long past midnight when finally mattresses and sacks of straw were brought in, which, if these had been provided first, would have been most welcome.

Meanwhile some food and drink was delivered, which was consumed with few objections, although it looked like an untidy mess of leftovers instead of an indication of the respect usually paid to guests.

Chapter Four

The ill manners and impertinence of some in the company added to the restlessness and discomfort of that night. They teased one another, woke each other up, and played all sorts of tricks between them. The next morning everyone complained about their "good friend" the baron for having misled them and giving them such a false picture of the orderliness and comfort which was to be theirs. But to their amazement and consolation the count himself came to see them quite early, accompanied by several servants, and inquired after their circumstances. He was very angry when he learned how badly they had been treated. The baron, limping, blamed the steward for not carrying out his orders and gave him what he thought was a real dressing down.

The count immediately gave orders that while he was still there, everything should be done to ensure the greatest possible comfort for his guests. Up came several officers who straightway made the acquaintance of the actresses, and the count had the whole company introduced to him, calling each by his or her name and leavening the interviews with some jocular remarks, so that everybody was simply delighted with such a gracious lord. Wilhelm was the last to be presented, with Mignon clutching him. He apologized as best he could for being so bold, but the count seemed to accept his being there as a foregone conclusion.

There was one man standing near the count, whom they thought was an officer, though he was not wearing a uniform. He was engaged in conversation with Wilhelm, and seemed somehow superior to the others. He had big blue eyes gleaming from beneath a high forehead, and blond hair loosely combed back. His medium height gave him a sturdy, firm and rather stolid appearance. His questions were pointed, and he seemed to have considerable understanding of what he inquired about.

Wilhelm asked the baron about this man, but the baron had little good to say about him. He was referred to as the major, was really the prince's favorite, attended to his most private business and was considered his right arm. There

was even reason to believe that he was the prince's natural son. He had been with embassies in France, England and Italy, and was treated everywhere as a person of distinction, which made him conceited. He professed to know German literature through and through, and indulged in constant shallow mockery of it. The baron for his part had given up all contact with him, and thought that Wilhelm would do well to maintain a certain distance, for ultimately he did harm to everybody. He was known as Jarno, but no one knew what to make of such a name. Wilhelm had nothing to say, for, although the man had something cold and repellent about him, he felt a certain attraction toward him.

The actors now all had their separate quarters in the castle, and Melina gave strict orders that they should behave properly, the women keep to themselves, and everybody apply themselves to their roles and concentrate their thoughts on art. He posted rules and regulations, each consisting of several points, on all the doors. Fines were fixed and had to be deposited in a communal box.

Little attention was paid to these strictures. Young officers strolled in and out, joking with the actresses in what was certainly not the most refined manner, played tricks on the actors, and created havoc with Melina's attempts at policing his company before these had had time to establish themselves. People raced through the rooms, disguising themselves and hiding from each other. Melina, who had at first shown some seriousness, was soon driven to distraction by all this mischief, and when the count summoned him to see the place where the stage was to be set up, everything became worse. The young gentlemen, egged on by some of the actors, began to engage in stupid pranks which got coarser and coarser, so that it seemed as if the whole castle had been occupied by a frenzied troop of soldiers. The noise and confusion continued until mealtime.

The count had taken Melina into a large hall which was still part of the old building but connected to the new castle by a gallery. In this room a small stage could very well be set up, and the knowledgeable lord of the house explained how he wanted everything arranged.

Work was begun at great speed. The frame of the theater was set up and decorated, and the sets put together from what they had in their baggage that was usable; what they still needed was assembled with the help of some resourceful members of the count's entourage. Wilhelm took part in all this, making sure the perspectives were right, measuring distances, and generally concerned that nothing should look clumsy. The count, who often looked in, was very satisfied, explained how they should do some particular thing—rather than the way they were doing it—and showed remarkable artistic sense.

Then the rehearsals began in earnest. They would have had plenty of time and space, if they had not been constantly interrupted by the many strangers. More and more such guests kept arriving daily, and every one of them wanted to take a look at the company of actors.

Chapter Five

For some days the baron had been holding out to Wilhelm the hope of being personally presented to the countess. "I have told this excellent lady so much about your intelligent and very moving plays," he said, "that she is very eager to talk with you and hear you read one or the other of them. So be prepared, at the first signal from her, to come right over, for she will certainly be sending for you when she next has a morning that is not taken up with other things." Wilhelm should read the epilogue first, in order to make a particularly favorable impression. The lady had said how much she regretted that Wilhelm had come at such a busy time and that he had been obliged to make do with the rest of the troupe in the old part of the castle with such poor lodging.

Wilhelm took great pains choosing the play with which he should make his debut in the world of the great. "Up till now," he said to himself, "you have labored away quietly for yourself, and the approval you have received was only from a few personal friends. For a time you were in a state of complete despair as to whether you had any talent at all; and you are still deeply concerned whether you are on the right path and whether you have as much talent for the theater as you have liking for it. What you are about to attempt, in a private room where no theatrical illusion is possible and before experienced listeners, is a much riskier enterprise than it would be elsewhere, and yet I would not willingly forego the pleasure of regaining contact with previous joys and expanding my hopes for the future."

He read through several of his plays with close attention, making corrections here and there, then read them aloud in order to get the right tone and expression, and slipped into his pocket the one he had worked at most and hoped to gain most respect for, when one morning he was summoned in to the presence of the countess.

The baron had assured him that she would be there with one other lady who was one of her best friends. As he entered the room the Baroness von C** came towards him, expressed her pleasure at meeting him and presented him to the countess, who was just having her hair done and received him with friendly words and glances. Unfortunately, however, he saw Philine kneeling beside the countess's chair and engaged in all sorts of nonsense. "This dear child," said the baroness, "has been singing us a variety of songs. Do finish the one you have just started," she said to Philine, "so that we don't miss any of it."

Wilhelm listened very patiently to Philine's ditty, wishing the while that the hairdresser would leave before he began his reading. He was offered a cup of chocolate, and the baroness herself brought him a biscuit, but he took no pleasure in this, being too eager to recite to the lovely countess something that might interest her, and earn him her good graces. Philine was also very much in his way, for as a listener she had often been a nuisance. Anxiously he watched the hands of the hairdresser, hoping that his creation would any moment be completed.

Meanwhile the count had come into the room to inform them of the guests who would be arriving that day, and how the day should be divided up. He also mentioned various domestic matters that were liable to come up. After he had left, several of the officers sent a message asking the countess's permission to pay their respects at this time, because they would have to ride off before she went to table. Her valet de chambre having by now finished doing her hair, she asked the officers to come in.

Meanwhile the baroness was doing all she could to keep our friend entertained, and giving him her whole attention, to which he responded respectfully, albeit somewhat distractedly. Every now and again he would finger the manuscript in his pocket, hoping for the blessed moment to arrive, and almost losing his patience when a peddler was admitted to the room, who infuriatingly proceeded to open up all his boxes, chests and cases one after the other, displaying all his merchandise with the importunateness common in those of his trade.

More and more people came into the room. The baroness looked at Wilhelm and then to the countess. He noticed this, without appreciating the reason. This became clear to him only when he arrived back in his room after a fruitless hour of nervous waiting, and found a beautiful English wallet, which the baroness had managed to slip into his pocket. Soon after this the little moorish servant of the countess brought him a handsomely embroidered vest, without clearly indicating where it came from.

Chapter Six

The rest of that day was spoilt for Wilhelm by mixed feelings of irritation and gratitude, until the evening brought him a new task when Melina informed him that the count had spoken about a prologue to extol the prince on the day of his arrival. In it the qualities of this great hero and friend of humanity were to be personified. His various virtues should appear side by side praising him and proclaiming the honor of this noble personage; finally, his bust should be crowned with wreaths of laurel and flowers, and his decorated initials should shine forth from beneath a coronet. The count had entrusted Melina with providing the necessary verses as well as everything else that would be needed, and Melina hoped that Wilhelm would help him in what ought to be something that came quite easily to him.

"What!" said Wilhelm petulantly, "Are we to have nothing but portraits, illuminated initials and allegorical figures to honor a prince who, to my mind, deserves quite a different demonstration of acclaim. How can an intelligent man be flattered by seeing himself displayed in effigy and his name glittering on oiled paper! My fear is that, with our restricted range of costumes, the allegory might give rise to inappropriate jokes. If you want to do this or have it done for you, I have no objections; but I must ask you to leave me out of it."

Melina apologized, saying that the count had only given rough instructions, and it was entirely left to them to arrange the whole affair as they thought fit. "I will be very glad," said Wilhelm after hearing this, "to contribute to the pleasure of our noble lord, and my muse has never had so pleasing an assignment as to speak out, even hesitantly, in praise of such a worthy prince. I will think the matter over, and perhaps I may succeed in getting our little company to put on something that will make an impression."

From this moment on Wilhelm seriously pondered the task that was facing him. And before he went to sleep that night, he had it all fairly well sketched out. The next morning he got up early, completed the plan, worked out the individual scenes and even set down on paper some of the more imposing passages and the verses for the songs.

Wilhelm hastened to see the baron in order to ask him about certain details and lay before him his plan. The baron was well pleased, but somewhat perplexed, for, the evening before, he had heard the count talking about quite a different play which he had said was to be turned into verse.

"I do not believe it is the count's intention to have the play exactly as he described it to Melina," said Wilhelm. "Unless I am mistaken, all he was trying to do was to give us a hint as to the right type of thing. A connoisseur and man of taste indicates to an artist what he wants, but leaves it up to him how it should be produced."

"You're quite wrong," said the baron. "The count will insist that the play be performed exactly as he indicated. Your work does indeed have a remote resemblance to what he had in mind, and if we are to succeed in deflecting him from his first intentions, then we shall need the help of the ladies. The baroness in particular is superb at such operations; but the question will be whether your plan appeals to her sufficiently for her to espouse it. If it does, then everything will be all right."

"We need the assistance of the ladies anyway," said Wilhelm, "for our performers and costumes will hardly suffice for this performance. I am reckoning on the assistance of several pretty young children I have seen running about the house, who seem to belong to the valet and the steward."

He asked the baron to make the ladies acquainted with his plan. The baron returned soon afterwards with the news that the ladies would like that evening to talk to Wilhelm in private. They would pretend to be indisposed and retire to their chamber when the gentlemen sat down to cards, which would be a more serious affair than usual because of the arrival of a general. Wilhelm would be conducted there by way of a secret staircase, and then be in the best position to give account of his project. The element of furtiveness made the whole occasion into a doubly attractive prospect, especially for the baroness who was as excited as a child at the thought of this clandestine meeting arranged without the approval of the count.

Toward evening Wilhelm was fetched at the appointed time and cautiously led up to the ladies' apartment. The manner in which the baroness received

him in the small anteroom reminded him of former happy occasions. She conducted him to the countess's room, and there then began a whole series of questions. He put forward his plan with so much enthusiasm and vigor that the ladies were immediately taken by it. And our readers will surely allow us to acquaint them with it.

The play was to begin with a pastoral scene in which children performed a dance representing a game of changing places. This should be followed by an exchange of pleasantries and culminate in a round dance to a merry song. Then the Harper and Mignon would come on, and the countryfolk gather round them, attracted by their strange appearance. The old man would sing songs about peace, repose and happiness and then Mignon would perform the egg dance. This atmosphere of innocent joy should be disrupted by the sounds of martial music, and the whole company set upon by a troop of soldiers, with the men trying to defend themselves but being captured, and the women fleeing and being brought back. Just when everything seems to be collapsing into disorder, a certain person appears—the author had not finally decided who this should be—and announces that the leader of the army is approaching, and order is restored. The character of this heroic leader would now be described in all its finest features, safety from every attack will be assured, and arrogance and violence put an end to. Then should follow a general celebration in honor of the magnanimous captain of the army.

The ladies were well satisfied with all this, but maintained that there must be something allegorical in the play to be acceptable to the count. The baron proposed that the leader of the attacking soldiers should be presented as the spirit of discord and violence, and that Minerva should restrain him with shackles toward the end, announce the arrival of the hero, and proclaim his praises. The baroness assumed the responsibility for persuading the count that the plan he had suggested would be adhered to with only a few minor alterations; but she insisted that the bust, initials and coronet must appear at the end of the play, or else the whole performance would have lost its *raison d'être*.

Wilhelm, who had already sketched the fine words that he would place in Minerva's mouth in praise of his hero, objected for a while to what the baroness was insisting on, but finally gave way, because he felt pleasantly compelled to do so. The beautiful eyes of the countess and her charming manner would quite easily have persuaded him to abandon his most cherished ideas, the unity of the composition together with every contributing detail that he so much desired, and to act against all his poetic convictions. He faced a real struggle with his middle-class state of mind when, during the casting, the ladies insisted that he himself should play one of the roles.

Laertes was given the role of the mighty god of war. Wilhelm should play the leader of the countryfolk, who had some very nice and impassioned lines to speak. He objected at first, but finally had to give in, having no excuse after the baroness had explained to him that theater at this castle was really only a social affair in which she too would be happy to participate, if they could find

a proper way to include her. The ladies then dismissed him with many signs of their friendly feelings toward him. The baroness assured him that he was a most exceptional person, and accompanied him back to the staircase, wishing him goodnight with a clasp of the hands.

Chapter Seven

Wilhelm was fired up by the sincere interest shown by the ladies and his own description of the action of the play; the whole structure now became clear to him, and he spent most of the night and next morning carefully composing dialogue and songs. He was almost finished, when he received a summons to go to the new part of the castle where the count, having just finished breakfast, wished to speak to him. He entered the hall, and once again it was the baroness who came to meet him, and, under the pretext of wishing him a good morning, whispered in his ear: "Don't tell him anything about the play, except in answer to his questions."

"I am told," said the count, "that you are busily working at my prologue in honor of the prince. I approve of the idea of bringing in Minerva, but I have been wondering how she should be costumed so as not to arouse offense. I have therefore asked that all the books in my library which include a picture of her should be brought here." And at that very moment in came several servingmen with huge baskets containing books of all shapes and sizes.

Montfaucon's *Antiquity Illustrated*, catalogues of Roman sculptures, gems and coins, together with all kinds of treatises on mythology were consulted and the representations of Minerva compared with each other. But even that did not satisfy the count, whose excellent memory recalled all sorts of Minervas from title pages, vignettes and other places. And so one tome after another had to be fetched from the library, and the count was soon surrounded by piles and piles of books. Finally, when he could not think of any more Minervas, he exclaimed with a laugh: "I bet there isn't a single Minerva left in my library, and this must be the very first time that a collection of books completely lacks a true representation of their presiding goddess."

Everyone was amused at this, and Jarno laughed the hardest, for it was he who had been urging the count to have more and more books brought in.

"Well," said the count, turning to Wilhelm, "is it really important which goddess? Minerva or Pallas? The goddess of war, or the goddess of the arts?"

"Wouldn't it be best, your Excellency, not to be specific on that point?" Wilhelm suggested. "Why not present her in the double character which she had in mythology? She announces the arrival of a fighter, but only to bring peace to the populace. She praises a hero for his humaneness. She forcibly restrains force and thereby restores peace and quiet."

The baroness, afraid that Wilhelm might give himself away, cut this short by pushing forward the countess's tailor, who simply had to give his opinion on

how a Roman garment could best be created. This man, experienced in providing costumes for masquerades, knew the easiest way to make things, and since Madame Melina, despite her advanced pregnancy, was to play the role of Minerva, he was instructed to measure her. The countess had to decide, much to the chagrin of her maids, which of her dresses was to be cut up for the purpose.

The baroness slyly drew Wilhelm aside and told him that she had taken care of everything else. She sent him the director of the count's orchestra, so that he could start composing the necessary music or find suitable melodies from the stock of music in the castle. Everything was proceeding satisfactorily, the count made no further inquiries about the play, being mainly occupied with the transparent decoration at the end, which was to be a real surprise. His own inventiveness combined with the producer's skill did indeed achieve a very pleasing effect. On his journeys the count had seen big festivities of this kind, and had collected innumerable engravings and drawings. He really knew what was needed, and he had good taste.

Meanwhile, Wilhelm had finished the text of the play, gave everyone his part, took on his own, and the music director, who was equally knowledgeable about dance, arranged the ballet; everything was going along splendidly.

But then there occurred an unexpected obstacle, which threatened to make a big gap in all his well-laid plans. He had reckoned that Mignon's egg dance would make the strongest impression, and was therefore absolutely stupefied when with her usual curtness she refused to dance at all, saying she was now his and would never again appear on the stage. He tried every possible argument to persuade her, and did not give in until the poor child began to weep bitterly, fell at his feet, and cried: "Oh, Father, you stay away from it too!" He did not respond to this. Instead he began thinking of some other means of making the scene interesting.

Philine, who was to be one of the country maidens and sing the solo in the round dance, with the chorus taking up what she sang, was overjoyed at this prospect. She had everything she desired: her own room, constant proximity to the countess whom she entertained with her foolery and was daily rewarded for this, a costume for the play made specially for her, and, since she was the sort of person who delights in imitating others, she soon observed from being with the ladies as much decorum as she could comfortably assume, and in a very short time developed good manners and real *savoir vivre*. The attentions of the stablemaster increased rather than diminished, and since the officers were also constantly currying her favors, she found herself with an excess of riches, and decided for once to play the prude, using all her wits to affect an air of sophisticated superiority. This cool refinement enabled her to discover within a very few days all the weak spots in the company at the castle, and, if she had really wanted to, she could have made her fortune by this means. But in this too she only used her advantage to amuse herself, to give herself a pleasant day, and to be impertinent when she saw it was safe to be so.

When the actors had all memorized their parts, a full rehearsal was set. The count wanted to be present and his wife began to be nervous about his reactions. The baroness summoned Wilhelm privately, and the nearer the time for the rehearsal approached, the more embarrassed they all became, for absolutely nothing of the count's original idea remained in the play. Jarno, who happened just then to come in, was let in on the secret, and was delighted. He felt inclined to offer his services to the two ladies. "It would be unfortunate if you could not by your own efforts extricate yourself from this situation," he said to the countess. "But I will be lying in wait for any eventuality." The baroness then told him that she had talked to the count about the whole play, but only in bits and pieces and those not in any particular order so that he would be prepared for the details. But he still thought that the plan of the whole would conform with his original idea. "I will sit next to him this evening at the rehearsal," she said, "and try to distract him. I have also suggested to the decorator that he do the decorations at the end really well, but make sure that some little thing is not quite right."

"I know a court where we could use such active and intelligent people as you," said Jarno. "And if for some reason your skills are not producing the desired results, then just give me a sign and I will get the count out of the rehearsal and not let him back again until Minerva has made her appearance; the illuminations can be depended on to carry the day. For several days now I have had something to tell him concerning his cousin, which, for one reason or another, I have kept putting off. That will be a distraction for him, though certainly not the pleasantest."

Various business matters prevented the count from being there at the start of the rehearsal. Then he was entertained by the baroness. Jarno's help was never needed. For since the count found plenty to put right, to improve and to insist on, he totally forgot everything else, and since Madame Melina spoke her lines exactly as he would have wanted them, and the final tableau turned out well, he seemed completely satisfied. It was only when the prologue was over and they went on to the play itself, that he began to notice things and to wonder whether this play was really what he had thought up. At this point Jarno did come out of his ambush position, and the evening passed with the news of the prince's arrival being confirmed, and various people riding out to see the vanguard of the prince's entourage encamped in the neighborhood. The whole house was full of noise and commotion, and our actors, who had not always been looked after properly by the surly servingmen, were obliged to spend the time waiting and practicing in the old part of the castle without anyone paying any particular attention to them.

Chapter Eight

The prince finally arrived. The generals, staff officers and the rest of his attendants who arrived with them, and all those who visited them or came on

business—all these turned the castle into a regular beehive. Everyone was pushing and shoving to catch a glimpse of the illustrious prince, everyone admired his affable condescension, everyone was astonished to find that this great hero, this noble commander, was the smoothest of courtiers.

The household staff had been ordered by the count to be at their posts when the prince arrived, but none of the actors was to be visible because the count wanted to surprise the prince with the festivities that were being prepared. The prince, when he was escorted that evening into the handsomely lit great hall decorated with wall coverings from the previous century, seemed in no wise to be expecting a theatrical presentation, let alone a prologue in his honor. Everything went off splendidly, and when the performance was over all the actors had to appear before the prince, who graciously asked a question of every one of them, or had something pleasant to say to them. Wilhelm, as the author, had to step forward separately, and he too received his share of appreciation.

Nobody had anything much to say about the prologue, and in a few days it was if there had been no performance at all, except that Jarno occasionally talked to Wilhelm about it, and praised it, showing real understanding. But he added: "It is a pity that you play for empty nuts with empty nuts." Wilhelm pondered this expression for several days, not knowing how to interpret it or what he should make of it.

Every evening the troupe performed and exerted every effort to capture the audience's attention. Applause, barely deserved, encouraged them to think that it was on their account that the guests came pouring in here, just in order to be present at the performances, which were the center of attraction for all the guests at the castle. Wilhelm, however, realized to his regret that this was not the case. For although the prince sat through the first performances and followed them conscientiously from start to finish, he soon seemed to find good reasons to absent himself. The very people who from their conversation had seemed to Wilhelm to be the most intelligent, above all Jarno, only spent fleeting moments in the room where the stage was set up, and preferred to sit in the anteroom playing cards or talking about business.

He was disappointed that, despite persistent effort, he had failed to receive the amount of approval he thought he had earned. He assisted Melina in selecting the plays and copying the parts, he was always at hand during the frequent rehearsals and when anything else needed attention. Melina, secretly conscious of his own inadequacy, eventually accepted his help. Wilhelm meticulously memorized his parts and performed with feeling and vigor and as much style as his self-education allowed him.

The continued interest of the baron in their undertaking removed any doubts that the rest of the actors might have had, for he assured them that they were very successful and would be even more so especially if they were to perform one of his own plays. But he was sorry to say that the prince's taste was exclusively for French drama, and that some of his acquaintances, foremost among

them Jarno, had a passionate preference for those monstrous productions of the English stage.

The artistry of our actors may not have been adequately observed and respected; but as for their persons they were certainly not greeted with indifference by the spectators, both male and female. We have already reported that the actresses had from the start attracted the attention of the young officers. As time went on things went even better for them, and they made some important conquests. But let us not go into that, noting only that Wilhelm was becoming more interesting every day to the countess, and an unavowed affection for her was beginning to blossom in him. When he was on stage she could not take her eyes off him, and he soon seemed to be acting and speaking only for her. It was an indescribable delight for them just to look at each other, and they abandoned themselves to this harmless pleasure without nourishing stronger desires or worrying about what might happen. They exchanged glances despite what separated them as to birth and station, just like two outposts of opposing armies, facing each other across a river, and engaging in lighthearted talk without any thought of war—both entirely trusting their own feelings.

The baroness for her part had sought out Laertes, whose lusty vigor appealed to her, and he, despite his avowed hatred of women, was not averse to a passing adventure; this time he would have been really captivated against his will by the vivaciousness and attractions of the baroness, if the baron had not had occasion to do him a good, or perhaps bad, service by making him better acquainted with her sentiments. For one day when Laertes was singing her praises as the best of all women, the baron jokingly observed: "I see where matters stand. Our friend has secured another one for her stables." This unfortunate choice of metaphor, referring all too clearly to the blandishments of Circe, made Laertes extremely angry, and he was annoyed to hear the baron go on to say pitilessly: "Every newcomer believes he is the first to deserve such attentions, but he is utterly mistaken, for we have all, at one time or another, been led up the garden like this. Man, youth or boy—no matter who it is—every one of us has devoted himself to her for a time and striven to gain her favors."

Nothing is more dispiriting to a happy man who, entering the gardens of a sorceress, finds himself surrounded by the joys of an artificial spring, but, while listening for the song of the nightingale, finds his ears invaded by the grunts of some transformed predecessor.

Laertes was heartily ashamed after this disclosure that he had once more been led astray by his vanity to think well of a woman. So he avoided her from now on, consorting instead with the stablemaster, with whom he fenced vigorously and went hunting, but treating the whole matter as insignificant when he was rehearsing or performing on stage.

Sometimes of a morning the count and countess would summon members of the troupe, and on these occasions all had reason to envy Philine's undeserved

good fortune. While he was dressing, the count often had his favorite actor, the Pedant, at hand, sometimes for hours on end. The fellow was gradually decked out from head to toe, equipped even with a watch and snuffbox. Sometimes after dinner the entire company were bidden to appear before the lord and lady; they considered this a singular honor, not realizing that at the same time a whole pack of dogs were brought in by huntsmen and servants, and the horses being readied in the courtyard.

Wilhelm had been advised to praise Racine, the prince's favorite dramatist, when an appropriate opportunity presented itself, and thereby put himself in the prince's good graces. He found such an occasion one afternoon, when he had been summoned to appear with the others, and the prince asked him whether he too had studied the great French dramatists. Wilhelm said that he had. He did not notice that the prince had already turned to speak to someone else, without waiting for his answer. Almost interposing himself, he claimed the prince's attention by declaring that he had indeed a very high opinion of French drama and had read its masterpieces with great appreciation; and he had been delighted to hear that the prince paid great respect to the talents of a man like Racine: "I can well imagine," he went on to say, "that persons of noble station will appreciate an author who portrays so excellently and correctly the circumstances of high social rank. Corneille, if I may put it thus, portrays great people, but Racine portrays persons of quality. As I read his plays I can always picture a poet residing at a brilliant court, with a great king before his eyes, surrounded by all that is best, who can penetrate to the secrets of men which are concealed behind richly woven hangings. Whenever I study his *Britannicus* or his *Bérénice*, I have the sense of being at court myself, of being privy to things great and small in these dwellings of the gods of this earth, and through the eyes of a sensitive Frenchman I perceive kings adored by whole nations, courtiers envied by multitudes, all in their natural shape with all their defects and sorrows. The report that Racine died of grief because Louis XIV showed his dissatisfaction by no longer looking at him—that to me is the key to all his works. It was impossible for such a talented writer, whose whole life, and his death, depended on the eyes of a king, not to write plays worthy of the admiration of a king—and of a prince."

Jarno had joined them and listened with amazement to what Wilhelm said. The prince, who never answered but signified approval only by an appropriate glance, turned away. Wilhelm, still unaware that it was not seemly in such circumstances to prolong a conversation and try to exhaust a topic completely, would gladly have gone on talking and proved to the prince that he had read the prince's favorite poet with profit and emotional involvement.

Taking him aside, Jarno asked him: "Have you never seen a play by Shakespeare?" "No," Wilhelm replied, "for since his plays have become better known in Germany, I have not been close to the theater; and I don't know whether I should be pleased that mere chance has reawakened in me a passion which in my youth occupied me intensely. But I must say that what I have heard about

his plays has not made me eager to know more about such strange monstrosities which transcend all probability and overstep all propriety.”

“I would nevertheless advise you take a look at them,” said Jarno. “It can’t do anyone any harm to observe with one’s own eyes something that is strange. I will lend you a few samples, and you could not employ your time better than by disassociating yourself from everything else and, in the solitude of your own room, peering into the kaleidoscope of this unknown world. It is a sinful waste of time for you to spend it in dressing up these apes as humans and in teaching these dogs to dance. But one thing I would insist on in advance: don’t take offense at the form of what you read. As for the rest—that I can leave to your own true judgment.”

The horses were standing ready outside the door, and Jarno swung himself into the saddle to entertain himself by hunting with some of the other courtiers. Wilhelm followed him sadly with his eyes. He would have liked to talk about many things with this man who, though not in a very friendly fashion, had nevertheless given him new ideas, ideas that he needed to think about.

When a man approaches the point at which his powers, capabilities and concepts are about to develop decisively, he often finds himself in a state of uncertainty, which some good friend could easily help him overcome. He is like a traveler who falls into the water close to the shelter that he seeks. If someone comes to his aid right away and drags him on to dry land, then he only has to put up with getting wet, whereas if he has to get himself out of the water onto the other bank, he still has to take a big, tiresome detour to reach his destination.

Wilhelm was beginning to feel that things work out differently in the world from what he had imagined. He was now observing at close range the life, full of importance and significance, of those in high station, the great of this world, and he was surprised at the easiness of manner which he had acquired thereby. An army on the march, with a princely hero at its head, surrounded by so many active soldiers and so many eager admirers—all this gave wings to his imagination. It was in this state of mind that he received the books that Jarno had promised him. And in a very short while, he was seized, as one would expect, by the torrent of a great genius which swept toward a limitless ocean in which he completely lost and forgot his own self.

Chapter Nine

The baron’s relationship with the actors had gone through various modifications since their arrival at the castle. At first it had been one of mutual satisfaction. For since the baron, for the first time in his life, had one of his own plays, which up to then had only been social entertainment for amateurs, in the hands of real actors, with the prospect of a reasonably good performance, he was in the best of moods and full of generosity, purchasing little gifts for the

actresses from various peddlers who appeared and many a bottle of champagne for the actors. They in return took great pains over his works, and Wilhelm spared no effort in memorizing every detail of the lofty speeches of the illustrious hero the portrayal of whom was entrusted to him.

But gradually certain disagreement arose: the baron's preference for certain of the actors became more noticeable every day, and that naturally displeased the other members of the company. His praise was reserved exclusively for his favorites, and this aroused jealousy and discord in the troupe. Melina, who never knew what to do in such cases of dissension, found himself in a very unpleasant situation. Those who received praise were not particularly grateful for it, and those who did not indicated their displeasure in all sorts of ways and made things uncomfortable for their erstwhile respected benefactor. Their malicious attitude toward him was encouraged by a certain poem, of unknown authorship, which circulated in the castle. There had always been gossip about the baron's relations with the actors, with all sorts of tales told and certain events improved in the telling to make them amusing and more interesting. All this had been done in a relatively subtle way. But now the assertion was made that professional envy had broken out between him and some of the actors who fancied themselves as writers; and this was the basis for the poem we spoke of, which ran as follows:

O Baron, how I envy you
Your high place in society.
Poor wretch I am, and would that I
Were near to thrones, and had such land,
Proud castle as your father has,
With hunting and with shooting.

O Baron, how you envy me,
Poor wretched me; for so it seems,
That Mother Nature cared for me
And wished me well from childhood on
With easy heart and easy head,
I'm poor, but not in brains or wit.

So I would think it best if we,
Dear Baron, leave things as they are.
You stay your father's own true son
And I'll remain my mother's child.
Let's live without distrust and hate,
And neither grudge the other's title,
You on Parnassus seek no place
And I none with their lordships.

Opinions on this poem, which was circulating in several not very legible copies, were sharply divided, but no one could hazard a guess as to who had

written it. When people began to take a malicious delight in it, Wilhelm declared himself very much against this.

"We Germans," he exclaimed, "have fully deserved that our muses are still suffering from the disdain in which they have languished for so long, if we are not able to respect men of station who occupy themselves in one way or another with our literature. There is no contradiction between birth, station and wealth on the one hand, and genius and taste on the other. Foreign countries have taught us that, for amongst their best minds are many who belong to the aristocracy. So far it has been a miracle if anyone of our German nobility has devoted himself to learning, and few famous names owe their fame to their interest in art and learning, whereas others have emerged from obscurity and appeared as unknown stars on the horizon. But this will not always be so, and unless I am much mistaken, the uppermost class of our nation is in the process of employing its advantageous condition to gain in future the laurel wreath of the muses. Nothing is more distasteful to me than to hear not only members of the middle classes making fun of aristocrats who set store by the muses, but also those persons of quality, who with ill-considered frivolity and despicable malice watch others of their own station being scared away from a path that would bring honor and gratification to everyone."

This last utterance seemed to be directed at the count, for Wilhelm had heard that he thought the poem was really good. The count was of course accustomed to joke in his own particular style with the baron, and so he had welcomed this opportunity to tease him in various ways. Everyone had his own conjectures regarding the authorship of the poem, and the count, not willing to be proven less perspicacious, lighted on an idea that he swore must be the truth, namely that the author of the poem was his own Pedant, who was a really fine fellow and in whom he had long observed some signs of poetic genius. So to provide himself with good entertainment he sent for the man one morning and made him read the poem aloud in the presence of the countess, the baroness and Jarno, which the Pedant did in his own special way; he earned praise, applause, and a present for his efforts. He cleverly evaded answering the count's questions whether he had poems that he had written earlier. And so the Pedant gained the reputation of being a poet and a wit, but, in the opinion of those who were well disposed toward the baron, of a lamponer and a bad character. The count applauded him more and more, no matter how he played his roles, so that the poor fellow became quite puffed up, in fact almost crazy, and even thought of taking a room in the castle, like Philine.

If he had done this immediately, a most unfortunate accident might have been avoided. Late one night, when he was going to the old part of the castle and fumbling about in a narrow dark passage, he was set upon by several persons who held him fast while others rained blows on him and beat him up so badly that he could hardly drag himself to his feet. But he managed to creep upstairs to his companions who, although pretending to be outraged, felt

some inward pleasure at the occurrence and had to laugh at seeing him so thoroughly pummelled, his new brown coat covered with white dust as if he had had a fight with some millers.

The count, as soon as he got news of this, was absolutely furious. He treated the incident as a serious offense, an incursion on his jurisdiction, and instituted through his marshal a thoroughgoing inquiry. The spattered coat was to be the major evidence. Everybody in the castle having anything to do with powder or flour was drawn into the investigation. But all in vain.

The baron swore on his honor that although the kind of joke to which he had been subjected was not at all to his liking, and the count's own behavior had not been of the kindest, he had got over all that, and had in no wise been implicated in the misfortune that had befallen the poet or lampooner, whatever he should be called.

The activities of the guests and the general commotion in the castle led to the whole incident being quickly forgotten, and the count's unfortunate favorite had to pay dearly for his brief pleasure of wearing borrowed plumes.

The troupe performed every evening and was on the whole well looked after, but the better things went, the more demands they made, soon claiming that food, drink, service and accommodation were inadequate. They urged their protector, the baron, to see that they were better provided for and finally given the pleasures and comforts that he had promised them. Their complaints became more and more insistent, and the baron's efforts to satisfy them, ever more fruitless.

Wilhelm was less and less visible except at rehearsals and performances. Shut up in one of the back rooms, which only Mignon and the Harper were allowed to enter, he lived and moved in the world of Shakespeare, entirely oblivious of all that was going on outside.

There are said to be certain sorcerers who by magic can entice a host of different spirits into their chamber. The conjurations are so powerful that the whole room is filled and the spirits, jostled up to the tiny magic circle that the wizard has drawn, swirl around it and float above his head, constantly changing and increasing in number. Every corner is crammed full, every shelf occupied, eggs keep expanding, and gigantic shapes shrink to toadstools. But unfortunately the necromancer has forgotten the magic word to make this flood of spirits subside. As Wilhelm sat there reading, hosts of feelings and urges arose within him of which he had previously no conception or intimation. Nothing deflected him from this state of total absorption, and he was most impatient when someone came to tell him what was going on outside.

Hence he hardly paid any attention when he heard that some public punishment was about to take place in the castle yard and a boy be whipped, who was under suspicion of breaking into the castle at night. Since he was wearing a wigmaker's coat, he might well have been one of the baron's assailants. The boy categorically denied this and could not therefore be formally punished, but the intention was to accuse him of vagrancy and send him packing, because

he had been wandering around the neighborhood for several days, spending the nights in mills, and had finally placed a ladder against a garden wall and climbed over.

Wilhelm did not think there was anything remarkable about this, but then Mignon came rushing in and told him the boy was Friedrich who, since his dispute with the stablemaster, had been lost from sight, both for the actors and us readers.

Wilhelm, who took an interest in this boy, hurried down to the courtyard where preparations for the occasion were already underway. For the count loved ceremony, even in small matters like this. The boy was brought in, but Wilhelm intervened on his behalf, asking for a delay because he knew the boy and had various things concerning him to report. He had some difficulty in making his point, but was finally given permission to speak privately with the delinquent. Friedrich assured him that he was in no wise implicated in the maltreatment of an actor. He had been strolling around the castle and had crept in at night to visit Philine, for he had spied out the location of her bedroom and would certainly have got to it if he had not been apprehended.

Wilhelm, not anxious to reveal this relationship (which might affect the good reputation of the company), rushed off to see the stablemaster, and asked him, in view of his acquaintance with the person involved and those at the castle, to act as an intermediary and get the boy released. With Wilhelm's help the whimsical fellow thought up quite a tale: the boy had once belonged to the troupe, then run away, then wanted to join it again, and so had decided to visit some of his previous associates at night, in order to win their good graces. Everyone said that he had always behaved well, the ladies too gave their opinion, and he was set free.

Wilhelm took charge of him, and so Friedrich became the third member of the strange family that for some time Wilhelm had considered his own. The Harper and Mignon were pleased to see Friedrich again, and all three of them were now determined to be attentive to the needs of their friend and protector, and to provide him with what pleasure they could.

Chapter Ten

As each day passed, Philine discovered more and more how to ingratiate herself with the ladies. When they were alone together she would move the conversation on to the subject of the men who had been around, and Wilhelm was not the last to be talked about. She was bright enough to be aware that he had made a great impression on the countess's feelings; and so she told her what she knew (and didn't know) about him, carefully avoiding anything that might be to his disadvantage, and praising his nobility of character, his generosity, and especially his moral behavior toward women. All other questions that were addressed to her she answered prudently, and when the baroness

noticed the countess's increasing emotional attachment, she was delighted at the discovery. For her own relationships with various men, and most recently with Jarno, were not unknown to the countess, whose pure soul could not possibly observe such frivolity without disapproval and gentle reproach.

The baroness and Philine, therefore, had, each in her own way, a special interest in bringing Wilhelm and the countess closer together. Philine hoped in addition to regain his favor and to operate to her own advantage when such opportunity should arise.

One day, when the count had gone off hunting with the rest of the company and the men were not expected back till the following morning, the baroness thought up an amusement of the sort she particularly favored. She liked to dress up and was always appearing, in order to surprise everybody, as a peasant girl, or a page boy, or a huntsman. She acquired thereby a sort of faery reputation, flitting hither and thither and emerging where she was least expected. She was simply delighted when she was able to wait at table, or mingle with the guests without being recognized, only to reveal her identity in some humorous fashion.

That evening she summoned Wilhelm to her room, and since she had something else to do first, Philine was told to prepare him for what was to come. He arrived, and was surprised to find the flighty girl there instead of the noble ladies. She received him with an air of decorous ease, which she had worked at perfecting, and thereby made him likewise adopt a stance of politeness. First she referred jocularly and in general terms to the good fortune that attended him and that, as she well observed, had brought him here at this very moment. Then she reproached him gently for his behavior toward her, which had so tormented her. She blamed herself for this as she had deserved his attentions; she vividly described what she called her former condition, and added that she would despise herself if she were unable to change and make herself worthy of his friendship.

Wilhelm was astounded by this speech. He had too little experience of the world to know that irreparably frivolous persons are often those who demean themselves most, admit their faults most openly, and deplore them, although they do not possess the slightest ability to abandon the course which their strong natures have impelled them to take hitherto. He therefore could not be unkind to the winsome sinner, engaged in conversation with her and learnt the plan for an unusual masquerade which was intended to be a surprise for the beautiful countess.

He had some misgivings, which he voiced to Philine. Yet when the baroness came in, she left him no time to express further doubts, but carried him off, and said the hour had come. It was already dark. She led him into the count's dressing room and made him take off his coat; Wilhelm slipped into the count's silk dressing gown, and she put the count's red-ribboned nightcap on his head. She then took him into the count's sitting room, told him to settle himself in the big armchair with a book, lit the reading lamp in front of him, and instructed him on what kind of role he was to play.

The countess, she said, would be told that the count had returned unexpectedly and was in a bad mood. She would then come in, walk up and down, seat herself on the arm of the chair and say a few words. He should continue playing the role of the husband as long and as well as he possibly could; and if at last he had to reveal his identity he should be courteous and gallant.

Wilhelm felt very uncomfortable in this strange disguise. The whole idea had astonished him, and its execution was proceeding before he had time to think about it. The baroness had already left him before he realized how dangerous the position in which he had put himself really was. He could not deny that the countess's beauty, youth and grace had made a considerable impression on him, but he was by nature in no sense inclined to empty shows of gallantry; yet his principles did not induce him to undertake anything more serious. So he was in a state of some perturbation—afraid of displeasing the countess and yet equally concerned not to please her too much.

His imagination recalled all those occasions when female charms had affected him. Mariane in her white *négligé* was there, begging him to remember her. Philine's amiability, her lovely hair and her ingratiating behavior had worked on him once again when he saw her just now. But all this receded into the distance when he thought of the noble, radiant countess, whose arm he should feel on his neck in a few moments and whose innocent caresses he was called upon to return.

He could however never have guessed the strange manner in which he would be relieved of his discomfort. How astonished and frightened he was when he heard the door open behind him, and a quick look in the mirror showed him quite clearly that it was the count entering with a candle in his hand! His hesitation what to do now, whether to remain seated or get up, run away, confess, prevaricate or ask for forgiveness, all that lasted only a few moments. For the count, who had stood motionless in the doorway, turned back, gently closing the door behind him. At that very moment the baroness rushed in through a side door, extinguished the lamp, dragged Wilhelm out of the chair and pulled him into the dressing room, where he discarded the count's dressing gown, putting it back in its usual place. She then hung Wilhelm's coat over her arm, and hurried away with him through various rooms, passages and box rooms until they reached her own room. There she told him, once she had recovered, that she had gone to the countess to spin the yarn that the count had arrived earlier than expected. "But I know that already," the countess had said. "What can have happened? I've just seen him riding through the side gate." So the baroness in fright had rushed to the count's room to fetch Wilhelm.

"Unfortunately you came too late!" said Wilhelm. "The count had just come into the room, and he saw me sitting there."

"Did he recognize you?"

"I don't know. He saw me in the mirror, as I did him, and before I knew whether it was a ghost or he himself, he went out again and closed the door behind him."

The baroness became even more disconcerted when a servant called her and said the count was with his wife. She went there, crestfallen, and found the count sitting quietly brooding; when he spoke he was gentler and kinder than usual. She did not know what to make of this. They talked about what had happened on the hunt and why he had come back earlier. The conversation soon petered out. The count fell silent, and the baroness was particularly struck by the fact that he inquired after Wilhelm and expressed the wish that he should be asked to come and read to them.

Wilhelm, who meanwhile in the baroness's room had dressed and recovered himself somewhat, obeyed the summons with some trepidation. The count handed him a book from which with a certain uneasiness he read them an adventure story. His voice had something unsteady about it, something quivering that, thank goodness, was appropriate to the content of the story. From time to time the count signalled his approval, and when he finally let him go, he praised the expressiveness with which Wilhelm had been reading.

Chapter Eleven

Wilhelm had read but a few of the plays of Shakespeare, when he found that he had to stop because they affected him so deeply. His mind was in a state of ferment. He sought out an opportunity to speak with Jarno and told him that he could not thank him enough for providing him with such an experience.

"I foresaw that you would not be insensitive to the great merits of this most extraordinary and marvelous of writers," said Jarno. "Yes indeed," said Wilhelm, "I cannot remember a book, a person, or an event that has affected me as deeply as these wonderful plays that you so kindly brought to my attention. They seem to be the work of some spirit from heaven that comes down to men and gently makes them more acquainted with themselves. They are not fictions! One seems to be standing before the huge open folios of Fate in which the storm winds of life in all their turbulence are raging, blowing the pages back and forth. I am so astonished by the forcefulness and tenderness, the violence and the control of it all, that I am completely beside myself and long for the time when I will be able to continue reading." "Bravo!" said Jarno, clasping our friend's hand, "that's just what I wanted; and the results that I hoped for will not be long in coming."

"I wish," said Wilhelm, "that I could describe to you all that is going on in my mind. Presentiments that I have had from youth on, without being aware of them, about human beings and their destinies, all these I have found confirmed and enlarged in Shakespeare's plays. He seems to reveal all the mysteries without our being able to point to the magic word that unlocked the secret. His personages seem to be ordinary men and women, and yet they are not. Mysterious composite creatures of nature act out their lives before us in his

plays, like clocks with faces and movements of crystal, showing the passage of time in accordance with their regulated progression; at the same time one can perceive the springs and wheels that make them go. The few glances that I have cast into Shakespeare's world have impelled me more than anything else to take more resolute steps into the real world, to plunge into the flood of destinies that hangs over the world and someday, if fortune favors me, to cull several drafts from the great ocean of living nature and distribute these from the stage to the thirsting public of my native land."

"I am pleased at the state of mind you are in," said Jarno, clapping his hand on the impassioned youth's shoulder. "Don't give up your intention of embarking on an active life, and be quick to take full advantage of the good years that are given you. If I can assist you in any way, I will gladly do so with all my heart. I have never asked you how you came to be in this company of actors, to which you were neither born nor trained. What I would hope is that you will want to get yourself out of this situation; and I see that you do. I know nothing of your origins or your domestic circumstances, but you can entrust me with as much as you are willing for me to know. This much I would say to you now: that this present war can bring about rapid changes of fortune, and if you are prepared to put your talents and abilities at our service, and do not shy away from hard work, perhaps danger if needs be, then I would have an opportunity to put you in a position which you will not regret having occupied for a time." Wilhelm, extremely grateful for this, now felt in the mood to tell his friend and benefactor his whole life story.

While they were talking, they strayed into the middle of the park and came to the road that ran right through it. Jarno stood still for a moment, then said: "Think over my proposal, make your decision, give me your answer in a few days, and have confidence in me. I assure you that I have found it totally incomprehensible that you should have joined forces with such people as these. I have been distressed, indeed disgusted, that, in order to have some experience of life, you should have given your heart to an itinerant ballad singer and a silly androgynous creature."

He was about to continue, when an officer came riding up in haste, followed by a groom leading another horse. Jarno gave him a warm welcome. The officer dismounted and the two of them embraced each other, then started a conversation while Wilhelm, dismayed at Jarno's last words, stood to the side, deep in thought. Jarno looked through some papers the officer had brought him, and this man went up to Wilhelm, extended his hand to him and said with emphasis: "I find you in worthy company. Take your friend's advice, and fulfil the desires of someone unknown to you who nevertheless is deeply concerned about you." As he said this, he embraced Wilhelm, pressing him warmly to his breast. Then Jarno came up and said to the stranger: "The best thing would be for me to accompany you. You can get the necessary orders and ride off before nightfall." They both got on their horses and left our astonished friend to his own reflections.

Those last words of Jarno's were still ringing in his ears. He could not bear to have these two human beings who had so innocently gained his affection, debased by a man whom he respected so highly. The strange embrace of the officer whom he did not know, affected him little, merely arousing his curiosity and stirring his imagination for a brief moment; but Jarno's words had struck deeply, he felt wounded by them, and recoiling he reproached himself for having temporarily ignored and forgotten that icy harshness of Jarno that was apparent in his every glance and motion. "No, no!" he shouted, "you insensitive man-of-the-world, you only imagine that you can be someone's friend. Nothing you have to offer me can outweigh the affection which binds me to these two unfortunate creatures. What luck that I should have found out in good time what to expect from you."

Mignon came to meet him and he clasped her in his arms, saying: "Nothing shall part us, good little creature! The seeming wisdom of the world shall not persuade me to leave you, or to forget what I owe to you."

The girl, whose passionate embraces he usually warded off, was delighted by this unexpected outburst of affection, and clung so close to him that he had difficulty in loosening her hold.

From that time on he was more attentive to Jarno's actions, not all of which seemed laudable to him, and some he utterly disapproved of. He had, for instance, a strong suspicion that the poem about the baron, which had had such dire consequences for the Pedant, was Jarno's work. Since Jarno had laughed in Wilhelm's presence about the whole incident, our friend concluded that this was the sign of a thoroughly corrupt sensibility; for what could be more cruel than to make fun of an innocent man one had caused suffering to, instead of making amends or somehow repairing the damage. Wilhelm would gladly have done this himself, for, by a strange coincidence, he had tracked down the perpetrators of the nocturnal attack.

Up till now he had been kept unaware of the fact that several of the young officers had been spending whole nights in jollification with some of the actors and actresses in a lower room in the old part of the castle. One morning, having got up early as usual, he happened to enter this room and found the young gentlemen engaged in an unusual form of toilet. They had crumbled chalk into a dish of water, and were brushing the paste on to their vests and trousers, without taking them off, in order to clean them up as quickly as possible. Astonished at such activities our friend remembered the white powder and the stains on the Pedant's coat, and his suspicions increased when he learned that several of the baron's relations were amongst the company.

In order to check out his suspicions further he made sure the young gentlemen were supplied with breakfast. They were very lively and told some amusing stories. One of them in particular, who had been a recruiting officer for a time, was full of praise for his captain's guile and skill in outwitting all kinds of persons and persuading them to enlist. He described in detail how young persons from good families who had been carefully educated, were

fooled by promises of excellent treatment, and he laughed heartily at those simpletons who were at the beginning so delighted at earning praise and privileges from some highly regarded, gallant, shrewd and openhanded officer.

Wilhelm blessed his guiding spirit for so unexpectedly showing him the abyss which he had approached so unwittingly! He now saw Jarno simply as a recruiting officer; the embrace of the unknown officer was easily explained. He detested the sentiments of these two men and from that moment on, avoided everyone wearing a uniform; and he would have been delighted by the news he received that the army was moving on, were it not for his fear that this would separate him, maybe forever, from the lovely countess.

Chapter Twelve

The baroness had spent several anxious days, tormented by worries and unsatisfied curiosity. For the count's behavior since that adventurous episode was a complete mystery to her. His whole manner had changed; there was no more of his usual joking. He made no such demands on his friends and servants as previously. There was no longer that characteristic pedantry and officiousness about him; he was quiet, wrapped up in himself, and yet serene—altogether a different person. For the readings that he sometimes instigated he selected serious, often religious books, and the baroness was in a constant state of anxiety that behind this seemingly placid exterior there lurked some secret grudge, some tacit intention to avenge the outrage he had so accidentally discovered. She therefore decided to confide in Jarno, which was easy for her because her relationship with him was of the kind which does not normally involve concealing things from each other. Jarno had recently become her lover, but they were clever enough to keep the world unaware of their inclinations and their pleasures. The countess was the only one to see this new romantic attachment, and the baroness's determination to get the countess involved in something similar was most probably caused by her eagerness to avoid the reproaches that she often had to endure from that noble soul.

When the baroness told the whole story to Jarno, he burst out laughing and said: "The old fellow must surely think that he saw himself, and that this apparition foretells misfortune, perhaps even death, for him. And so he has become tame like all half-men when they think of that dissolution which no one has escaped or can ever escape. But let us quietly work on him so that he will no longer be a burden to his wife and his guests."

So they began, as soon as it was appropriate, to talk in the count's presence about presentiments, apparitions and the like. Jarno played the skeptic, and the baroness took the same line; they pushed this so far that the count took Jarno aside and reproved him for his free thinking, using his own experience to try to convince him of the possibility and reality of such phenomena. Jarno acted as though he were astonished, first expressing his doubts, but finally

pretending to be convinced; and then had a good laugh with his friend in the peace of the night at this feeble man-of-the-world, suddenly cured of his incivility by a bogymen but still admired for the equanimity with which he awaited impending disaster, perhaps even death.

"He won't however be prepared for the most natural result of that apparition," exclaimed the baroness with the high spirits to which she always returned once some worrisome thought had been dispelled. Jarno was richly rewarded with her favors, and the two of them began plotting how to make the count even more tractable and to work on the countess's feelings for Wilhelm and intensify them.

With this purpose in mind, they told the countess the whole story. She was displeased at first, but then began to think more and more in her quiet moments about the scenario that was being organized for her, fleshing it out in detail.

The preparations undertaken on all sides soon made it clear that the army would indeed move on further and the prince change the location of his headquarters. It was even reported that the count would leave his estate and return to town. Our actors could therefore cast their own horoscope; but only Melina acted in accordance with it, the others sought to snatch every possible enjoyment from the moment.

Meanwhile Wilhelm was occupied with a very special task. The countess had asked for a copy of his plays, and he regarded such a request from so charming a lady as the highest possible reward.

Any young author who has not yet seen himself in print, will devote the utmost care to producing a clean and well-written copy of his works. For that is, so to speak, the golden age of authorship. One feels transported back to an era when the printing press had not yet deluged the world with so many useless writings, and only works of real quality were copied and preserved by the noblest of individuals; as a result, it is all too easy for one to arrive at the false conclusion that a carefully copied manuscript is a great work of art, worthy of being owned and displayed by a connoisseur and patron.

A banquet was arranged in honor of the prince, who was soon to depart. Many ladies from the neighborhood had been invited, and the countess had dressed in good time for the occasion. She was wearing a more sumptuous gown than usual, her hair and headdress were more elaborate, and she was wearing all her jewels. The baroness too had done her utmost to be dressed in splendor and with taste.

Philine, when she noticed that time was hanging heavy on the ladies as they waited for the guests to arrive, suggested they should send for Wilhelm, who was anxious to deliver his manuscript and read them some parts of it. He came, and was astonished to see how much the graceful appearance of the countess was enhanced by all this finery. At the bidding of the ladies he read aloud to them, but so inattentively and poorly that, if his listeners had not been so indulgent, they would quickly have sent him away.

As soon as he saw the countess, it seemed as if an electric spark had flashed before his eyes, and he hardly knew how to find breath for his recitation. That beautiful woman had always been a pleasure to look at, but now he thought he had never seen anything so perfect, and his mind was invaded by a multitude of reflections, the sum total of which was roughly this: "How foolish of so many poets and sensitive persons to inveigh against finery and splendor and to demand instead that women of all classes should dress in simple, natural clothes. They rail against finery without considering that it is not the poor old finery we dislike when we see an ugly, or not very pretty person decked out in such odd splendor. But I would ask all men of taste whether they would really prefer to have any of these pleats removed, these ribbons and lace, these puffed sleeves, these curls, these glistening gems. Wouldn't they be afraid of spoiling the pleasing effect that emerges so readily and naturally to meet their gaze? Of course they would! For if Minerva rose fully armed from the head of Jupiter, this goddess seems to have emerged light-footed from some flower in all her finery."

He kept looking at her as he was reading, as if to retain this impression forever, and made several mistakes; but he was not put out by this, though he would usually have been in despair if a wrong word had marred his reading.

A curious noise, as if announcing the arrival of the guests, brought the performance to a close. The baroness left, and the countess, before closing her dressing table, took a box of rings and put several of them on her fingers. "We will soon be parting," she said, fixing her eyes on the box. "Take this to remind you of a good friend who wishes nothing more than that all may go well for you." She then took out a ring with a coat of arms woven of hair and studded with gems, all covered with crystal. She handed this to Wilhelm, who was at a loss what to say or do, so transfixed was he to the spot. The countess closed up her dressing table and seated herself on the sofa.

"And am I to go empty-handed?" said Philine, kneeling before the right hand of the countess. "Just look at that man who has plenty to say at the wrong time but now can't even stammer out his meager thanks. Come along, sir! At least act as though you are grateful, or if no words occur to you, then at least follow my example." She took the countess's right hand and kissed it warmly. Wilhelm fell on his knees, seized her left hand, and pressed it to his lips. The countess seemed embarrassed, but not displeased.

"Oh dear!" said Philine. "I have seen so much finery in my time but never a lady so worthy of wearing it. What bracelets! And what a hand! What a necklace! And what a bosom!"

"Be quiet, you flatterer," said the countess.

"Is that a picture of the count?" asked Philine, pointing to a splendid medalion on a fine chain that the countess was wearing at her side.

"Yes, it was painted at the time of our wedding," the countess replied.

"Was he so young at the time?" asked Philine. "I know you have only been married for a few years."

"His youthful appearance was the work of the artist," the countess replied.

"He is a handsome man," said Philine. "But," she went on, putting her hand on the countess's heart, "did no other image ever creep into this secret compartment?"

"You are very impertinent, Philine!" she exclaimed. "I have spoilt you. Don't ever let me hear anything of that kind again!"

"When you are angry, you make me unhappy," said Philine as she jumped up and ran out of the room.

Wilhelm continued to hold the lovely hand of the countess. His eyes were fixed on the clasp of the bracelet, and, to his great astonishment, he saw that his initials were there in diamonds.

"Do I really have some of your hair in this precious ring?" he timidly asked.

"Yes, indeed," she said in an undertone. Then she regained her composure, and, grasping his hand, she said: "Do get up! Farewell!"

But he, pointing to the clasp, said: "Here by some strange chance, are my initials!"

"How so?" said the countess. "They are those of a lady who is a good friend of mine."

"They are my initials," he said. "Do not forget me. Your image remains graven in my heart. Farewell; now let me leave!"

He kissed her hand and was about to stand up. But as in dreams we are surprised by strange things bringing forth even stranger things, it suddenly happened, without knowing how, he found himself grasping the countess in his arms, her lips touching his, and their blissful exchange of passionate kisses was like the sparkling draft from the freshly filled goblet of a first love.

Her head was resting on his shoulder, and she was totally unconcerned about her disarranged curls and ribbons. She had put her arm around him. He embraced her eagerly and time and time again pressed her to his bosom. If only such a moment could last forever! If only harsh fate had not broken up these few precious moments! Wilhelm was frightened and stunned when this happy dream was shattered by a scream from the countess, who suddenly withdrew her hand and clutched her heart.

Stupefied he stood there. She covered her eyes with her other hand and, after a moment's pause, cried: "Now leave! Leave quickly!"

He still stood there.

"Leave me," she cried, taking her hand away from her eyes; and looking at him with an indescribable expression in her eyes, she added, in a voice full of love: "Leave me, if you love me!"

Wilhelm left her room and was back in his own before he knew where he was.

Unhappy creatures! What strange warning of chance, or fate, had driven them apart?

Book Four

Chapter One

His head propped on his arm, Laertes was gazing pensively out of the window into the open fields. Philine came creeping through the great hall, leaned on her friend and mocked at his serious expression. "Don't laugh!" he said to her. "It is horrible how quickly time passes, how everything changes and comes to an end! Just look—a little while ago there was a whole encampment out there, splendid to look at, the tents full of life and merriment, the whole area carefully patrolled. And now, suddenly, it is all gone. The only sign that remains will soon be the trampled straw and the holes where they cooked. Then it will all be ploughed up, and the presence of so many thousands of valiant men in these parts will be nothing more than a ghostly remembrance in the minds of a few old people."

Philine began to sing and dragged her friend into the great hall to dance. "Since we can't pursue time that is passed," she said, "let us at least celebrate it joyfully and gracefully while it is passing us by."

They had danced only a few steps when Madame Melina came through the hall. Philine was wicked enough to invite her to join the dance, reminding her of her misshapen appearance because of the pregnancy. "If only," said Philine behind her back, "I did not have to see more expectant mothers!" "Well, she is at least expecting something," Laertes replied. "But it doesn't suit her," said Philine. "Haven't you noticed that wobbling pleat in the front of her shortened skirt which always parades in front of her when she moves? She doesn't have either the sense or the ability to take herself in hand and to conceal her state."

"Never mind," said Laertes. "Time will take care of that."

"But it would be nicer," said Philine, "if children could be shaken off trees."

In came the baron with some kind words from the count and countess, who had left very early, and brought them some presents. He then went to see Wilhelm, who was occupied with Mignon in the adjoining room. The child was friendly and helpful. She had inquired about his parents, his siblings and his other relations, thereby reminding him of his obligation to give them some news.

The baron delivered parting greetings from the count and countess, and assured him of the count's great satisfaction with him, his acting, his poetic productions and his efforts on behalf of their little theater. As a tangible sign of this appreciation he pulled out a purse, through the fine mesh of which the glitter of new gold coins attracted the eye. Wilhelm stepped back, and refused to accept it. But the baron went on to say: "Just consider this gift as a recompense for the time you have expended and a recognition of your hard work, rather than as a reward for your talent. If such talent earns us reputation and the affection of others, it is only reasonable that we should by our efforts and application also acquire the means to supply our ordinary needs, for none of us is all spirit. If we were in a town where anything could be bought, this sum might have been used to buy a watch, a ring, or some such thing. But I am putting a magic wand into your hands for you to conjure up something precious that is to your liking, something you can use, and retain in remembrance of us. Do respect this purse. The ladies knitted it themselves, with the idea that the receptacle should endow the contents with the most pleasing form."

"Forgive my embarrassment and hesitation at accepting this present," said Wilhelm. "But it seems to annihilate the little I did and restrict the free play of such happy memories. Money is a fine way of settling something. I would not wish this house to settle with me in this fashion."

"That is not the case," the baron replied. "But since you are so sensitive, you will surely not demand that the count should remain entirely in your debt; he is a man who sets great store on being attentive and just. It has not escaped him that you have exerted every effort and devoted all your time to the fulfilment of his intentions; he also knows that in order to speed up certain necessary arrangements you spent some of your own money. How can I face him again if I cannot assure him that his recognition has given you pleasure?"

"If I were just to think of myself and could follow my own inclinations," Wilhelm responded, "I would, despite all your reasoning, steadfastly refuse to accept this handsome gift. But I cannot deny that, although it makes me uneasy, it comes at a time when it will relieve me of some embarrassment I have felt toward my family. For I must give them an account of how I have been spending my time and money, and I have not managed either well. Now, thanks to the generosity of his Excellency the count, I will be able to have the consolation of telling my parents about the good fortune that my strange detour has led me into. So I will let the sense of a higher obligation overcome my squeamishness and those slight pangs of conscience which warn us in such eventualities as this. And in order to be able to look my father straight in the eyes, I lower mine shamefacedly before yours."

"It is really odd," the baron replied, "what strange compunction one has in accepting money from friends and benefactors when one would be grateful and delighted at any other gift from them. Human nature has many such peculiar tendencies to create scruples and systematically nourish them."

"Isn't it the same with all matters of honor?" asked Wilhelm.

“True,” said the baron, “and also with prejudices. We hesitate to weed them out, lest we should at the same time tear out healthy plants. But I am always happy when some people realize what they can and should disregard. I am pleasantly reminded of the anecdote of an intelligent poet who wrote several plays for a court theater which were greatly appreciated by the monarch. ‘I must give him a suitable reward,’ the generous prince declared. ‘See if there is any particular jewel that would give him pleasure, or a sum of money, if he will accept it.’ The poet jokingly responded to the courtier who brought the message: ‘I am deeply grateful for such a gracious thought, and since the Emperor takes money from us every day, I do not see why I should be ashamed of taking money from him.’”

No sooner had the baron left the room, when Wilhelm eagerly counted the sum which had so unexpectedly and, as he thought, undeservedly, come to him. For the first time he seemed to have a sense of the value and worth of money (such as we usually acquire only later) as the gleaming pieces came rolling out of the delicately wrought purse. He made a tally and discovered that, mindful of the fact that Melina had promised to repay the advance forthwith, he had as much, or even more, than on the day he bought Philine that first bouquet. With secret satisfaction he thought of his talent, and with a certain pride he reflected on the good fortune that had directed and stayed with him. Confidently he now took up his pen to write to his family to relieve them of all anxiety by depicting his recent behavior in the best of lights. He avoided giving a factual account. Instead he merely hinted, in significant and mystical terms, at what it was that might have happened to him. The favorable state of his finances, the gains that his talents had brought him, the favor of persons of high station, the affections of women, his wide circle of acquaintances, the development of his bodily and mental powers, and his hopes for the future, all this built such a fantastic castle in the air, that not even a *fata morgana* could have produced a stranger combination.

Such was his mood of exaltation that, when he had finished his letter, he engaged in an extensive monologue, recapitulating the contents of the letter and picturing for himself an active and distinguished future. The example of so many noble warriors had excited him, Shakespeare’s plays had opened up a whole new world, and from the lips of the beauteous countess he had drawn a fire that he found it hard to describe. This surely could not, should not, remain without some effect on him.

The stablemaster came in and asked if they were finished packing. “Unfortunately,” said Melina, “nobody has thought about that yet.” So now they had to get going quickly. The count had promised to provide transportation during the next few days for the whole company: the horses were all ready and could not be done without for long. Wilhelm asked where his trunk was, and discovered that Madame Melina had already taken it for herself; he asked where his money was, only to learn that Melina had carefully packed it at the very bottom of the trunk. Philine told him she still had space in hers, took possession

of Wilhelm's clothes, and told Mignon to get everything else. Wilhelm, though somewhat unwilling, let this be done for him.

When everything was packed up and ready, Melina said: "It irritates me that we have to travel like circus folk and mountebanks. I wish that Mignon would put on women's clothes and the Harper have his beard cut." Mignon clung to Wilhelm and said passionately: "I am a boy, I don't want to be a girl." The old man remained silent, and Philine used the occasion to make some funny remarks about the quirks of their patron, the count. "If the Harper does cut his beard," she said, "he should sew it on to a ribbon and keep it, so that he could put it on if he were to meet the count somewhere; that beard was the sole reason for the count's generosity toward him." When they pressed her for an explanation of this strange remark, she told them the following: the count believed that it was a great aid to illusion if an actor continued to play his role and sustain his fictive character into real life, which was why he had so favored the Pedant, and thought it was very sensible of the Harper to wear his false beard not only on the stage but also during the day. He was pleased to see that the disguise looked so natural.

While all the others were making fun of the count's mistake and his strange opinions, the Harper drew Wilhelm aside, took leave of him, and implored him, with tears in his eyes, to let him go at once. Wilhelm assured him that he would protect him against anyone, that no one should be allowed to harm a hair of his head, let alone cut any of it off without his consent.

The old man was very moved by this, and there was a strange fiery glow in his eyes. "That is not what is driving me away," he cried. "I have long reproached myself for remaining with you. I must never stay anywhere, for misfortune pursues me and will harm those who associate with me. You have everything to fear if you do not let me go; but don't ask me why. I do not belong to myself. I cannot stay."

"To whom do you belong? Who can wield such power over you?"

"Sir, let me keep my horrible secret to myself. Give me leave to go! The vengeance that pursues me is not that of any earthly judge. I am caught up in inexorable fate. I cannot remain here, for I dare not."

"I will certainly not abandon you in this state of mind," said Wilhelm.

"It would be high treason against you, my benefactor, if I were to linger here. I feel safe with you, but you are in danger. You don't know whom you are harboring. I am guilty, and even more unhappy than guilty. My very presence dispels happiness, and when I appear every good deed is robbed of its force. I should always be in flight, never at rest, so that my evil genius may not catch up with me; for it is always after me and does not make its presence felt until I lay down my head to rest. I cannot better express my thanks to you than by leaving you."

"What a strange man you are! You can no more shake my trust in you than you can deprive me of the hope of seeing you happy. I do not want to pry into the mysteries of your superstitiousness, but if you believe that your life is

entangled in strange associations and premonitions, then I would say to you, for your consolation and enlivenment: Associate yourself with my own good fortune, and let us see whose genius is the stronger, your dark spirit or my bright one."

Wilhelm took the opportunity to offer him more words of consolation; for he had believed for some time now that his strange companion was someone who had, through chance or fate, incurred some great guilt and was continually oppressed by the memory of it. Just a few days previously, Wilhelm had heard him singing, and noted these peculiar lines:

For him the light of morning sun
With flames the clear horizon paints,
And round his guilty head there breaks
The beauteous image of the whole wide world.

Whatever else the old man chose to say, Wilhelm always had a stronger counterargument. He knew how to give everything a positive turn, he knew how to speak honestly, sincerely and sympathetically, and as a result the old man seemed to brighten up again and abandon his melancholy thoughts.

Chapter Two

Melina hoped to find quarters for his company in some small but prosperous town. They had reached the place where the count's horses had brought them, and were looking around for carriages and horses to convey them further. Melina had taken charge of the transportation arrangements, and proved to be as niggardly as ever. Wilhelm, on the other hand, the lovely ducats from the countess still in his pocket, thought he had every right to spend them in a pleasant way, forgetting all too readily that he had proudly included them in the sum which he had so volubly told the baron he was sending to his parents.

His good friend Shakespeare, whom he very much liked to consider his godfather (after all, he too was named William) had acquainted him with a certain Prince Hal who had spent some time with base and dissolute companions and, despite his noble character, taken great pleasure in the rough, unseemly and foolish behavior of his earthy associates. He welcomed this as an ideal against which to measure his present state; this made it much easier for him to indulge in a self-deception that had an almost irresistible appeal.

He began to think about his clothes. A vest which could have a short cloak thrown over it, was a most appropriate garb for a traveler. Long knitted trousers and laced-up boots seemed to be just right for someone on foot. He acquired a splendid silk sash which he put on under the pretext of keeping his body warm, but he freed his neck from the restrictions of a tie, and had some pieces of muslin fastened to his shirt which became rather wide and gave the effect of an old-fashioned collar. The silk scarf, his one memento of Mariane,

was loosely attached to the inside of his muslin ruff. A round hat with a brightly colored ribbon and a big feather completed the disguise.

The women assured him that the costume suited him perfectly. Philine seemed quite enchanted by it, and asked for some of his beautiful hair which he had lopped off to come closer to his Shakespearian ideal. She did this in a most agreeable way, and Wilhelm felt that, by acceding to her request, he was justified in behaving like Prince Hal. So he began to take delight in performing some merry pranks and encouraging the others to do likewise. They fenced and danced, thought up all sorts of pastimes, and washed down their high spirits with copious drafts of a tolerable wine they had discovered. In the midst of all this disorderly activity, Philine set her sights on our prim and proper hero. Let us hope that his guardian angel may look out for him.

One excellent form of entertainment which gave the company special pleasure, was the extemporization of a play in which they imitated and ridiculed their former patrons and benefactors. Some of them had well noted the characteristics of public politeness in persons of such high station, and their imitations were received with great acclaim by the rest of the group; when Philine produced from her secret archive some declarations of love that had been addressed to her, there was a general outburst of malicious laughter.

Wilhelm reproved them for their lack of gratitude. But they countered this by saying that they had worked hard for what they had received, and that the treatment of such worthy people as they believed themselves to be, had not been of the best. They complained about how little respect had been paid them, and how they had been put down. The mockery, teasing and mimicry started up again with everyone getting more bitter and more unjust.

Wilhelm reacted to this by replying: "I wish what you are saying were not so clearly the reflection of your own envy and egotism, and that you could judge the life of those people from the proper perspective. Being placed by birth and inheritance in a high position in society, is a matter of some consequence. If one's existence has been made easy by inherited wealth and one has been surrounded from one's youth by what I might call the appurtenances of humanity—and that in plenty—such a person is accustomed to consider these possessions as the *ne plus ultra* and is not so able to perceive the value of what nature has given to less fortunate beings. The behavior of persons of high station towards those of lesser station—but also amongst themselves—is determined by external signs of distinction: they will acknowledge anyone's title, rank, clothes and retinue but not so readily his natural merits."

The company strongly seconded his words. They thought it was horrible that a person of merit should be obliged to stand back, and that there was no sign of any spontaneous, sincere relationships in the world of the great. This last point they discussed in considerable detail.

"Don't blame them for that," said Wilhelm. "Rather be sorry for them. They rarely have a sense of the joys that are the reward of those inborn riches which

we consider most important. We who are poor in material possessions are rich in the pleasures of friendship—and only we. We are not able to enrich our loved ones by gracious favors, or advance them by privileged attention, or shower them with gifts. We have nothing but ourselves to give. We must give all of ourselves, and, if such a gift is to have value, we must assure our friends of its lasting nature. What a joy it is, and what happiness to provide for both the giver and the receiver! Devotion and loyalty impart a happy and lasting permanence to what might otherwise be merely passing. These are the richest possessions we have.”

While he was saying all this, Mignon had crept up and put her slender arms around him, leaning her head against his breast. He placed his hand on her head, and went on to say: “How easy it is for a noble personage to win men’s hearts and minds! A pleasant, relaxed, and only moderately humane behavior achieves miracles, and once a mind is captured, he has plenty of ways to maintain his hold over it. But for us, this is more difficult and not so easy to come by, which means that it is natural for us to put greater value on what we acquire and achieve. How touching is the devotion of some servants to their masters! How splendidly Shakespeare portrayed that! In such cases, loyalty and devotion are the expression of a noble soul striving to equal someone of higher station. By attachment and love, a servant becomes the equal of his master who is otherwise justified in considering him a paid slave. These virtues are only for those of lower station; they are germane to them, and become them well. If one can easily purchase one’s freedom, one is easily tempted to cease recognizing what one owes to others. I believe it would be true to say that a person of station can *have* friends, but not *be* a friend.”

Mignon pressed closer and closer to him.

“All right,” said someone of the company. “We don’t need their friendship, and we never asked for it. But they should have shown more understanding for the arts that they claimed to support. When we were playing at our best, no one listened. They were always taking sides; that’s what really decided things. An actor, who was favored, always got the applause, and others did not receive the approbation they deserved, because they were not in someone’s good graces. It was absurd how often mere stupidity and absurdity captured their attention and applause.

“When I think about all their malice and irony, I believe it’s much the same with art as with love. How can a man of the world, with his manifold activities, preserve that concentration which the artist must have if he is to produce a perfect work of art, and which those must have who become involved in it in the way the artist himself would wish and hope for. Believe me, my friends, talents are like virtues; one must love them for their own sake, or give them up entirely. They are recognized and rewarded only if one exercises them in private, like some dread secret.”

“Meanwhile, until some perceptive person discovers us, we can die of starvation,” a man in the corner cried out.

"But not immediately," said Wilhelm. "So long as one can live and move, one always finds some nourishment, though it may not be of the best. But what have you got to complain about? Weren't we, just when things looked worst for us, unexpectedly taken care of and well provided for? And now, while we're still in good shape, why don't we think of some way of continuing to practice our skills and improve ourselves? We are doing all sorts of other things and, like schoolchildren, pushing everything aside that might remind us of the work we have to do."

"I agree," said Philine. "This is totally irresponsible. Let's choose a play and perform it on the spot. Everyone must do his very best, as if we were performing before a huge audience."

It did not take them long to decide on the play. It was one of those that were very popular in Germany at the time but are now quite forgotten. Some of the actors whistled an overture and each thought about his role in the play. They began, and continued to act out the play right through to the end and with great attention. Everything turned out surprisingly well. They applauded each other, and had an excellent time.

When they were finished, they were all uncommonly satisfied, their time had been well spent, and each of them was especially pleased with his own performance. Wilhelm was expansive in his praise and their own conversation was lively and cheerful.

"You should see," said Wilhelm, "how much we will improve by such exercises and not restricting ourselves to mere memorizing, rehearsing and mechanical repetition. Musicians are to be commended for practicing in groups, for thereby they acquire not only pleasure but also greater precision, attuning their instruments to each other, preserving the right tempo, and modulating the dynamics. No one thinks of gaining praise by too loud an accompaniment to another's solo; everyone tries to play in the composer's spirit, and to perform well what the composer has given him to play, be it much or little. Should we not work just as precisely and intelligently, after all, we are concerned with an art much more subtle than music: we are called on to represent pleasingly and with taste the most ordinary as well as extraordinary utterances of human beings? Can there be anything more abominable than being sloppy at rehearsals and relying on a lucky break in the performance? We should take great pains to concentrate our efforts on pleasing each other, and value the approval of the public only if we have already applauded ourselves for what we are doing. Why is the conductor of an orchestra more certain of himself than the director of a play? Because in an orchestra anyone who makes a mistake is so audible that he must needs be ashamed, but I have rarely encountered an actor whose mistakes, whether forgivable or unforgivable, so offend him that he acknowledges them and is ashamed of them! I only wish the theater were as narrow as a tightrope so that no one without the necessary skill would venture onto it; nowadays everyone thinks he can readily strut on the boards."

This speech was well received, for everyone was convinced that he was not its target, since he had just done as well as the others. They agreed to work together as a group, on this particular journey as well as in the future. Since this was a matter of the right mood and free choice, they resolved that no director should interfere in what must be their own decision. They considered it a foregone conclusion that a republican administration would be the most suitable for good people like themselves, and insisted that the office of director should rotate amongst them. The director should be elected by the whole company, and he should be assisted by a kind of small senate. They were so taken with this idea, that they wanted to put it into practice immediately.

"I have nothing against such an experiment on this journey," said Melina, "and I will gladly give up my directorship until we are again settled in some place." He hoped thereby to save money, and have the republic and its interim director take over some of the expenses. They deliberated how best to organize this new form of government.

"It's a migratory empire," said Laertes, "at least we won't have any border disputes."

They got down to business right away, and elected Wilhelm as their first director. The senate was established, the women had seats and votes, and laws were proposed, rejected and approved. Time passed by without their noticing it while they were engaged in this sport, and because it passed so pleasantly, they thought they had achieved something really useful which through this new form of government opened up new vistas for the national stage.

Chapter Three

Since the company was now in such a good mood, Wilhelm hoped to be able to talk to them about the poetic merits of the plays. "It is not enough," he said when they met again next day, "for an actor to look casually at a play, to judge it merely from first impressions and express approval or disapproval without due study. That may be appropriate for the spectator who merely wants to be moved or entertained but is not really concerned with passing judgment. An actor, on the other hand, must be able to account for his praise or disapproval of a play. And how is he to do that if he does not penetrate to the author's mind and intentions? I have observed in myself these last days the mistake of judging a play from one particular role without considering it in relationship to the others. I felt this so vividly that I would like to tell you about this particular example, if you would lend me willing ears.

"You are acquainted with Shakespeare's marvelous *Hamlet* from a reading of it that gave you such pleasure at the count's castle. We made the decision to perform it and, without knowing what I was doing, I agreed to play the part of the prince. I thought I was studying the role properly, and began by memorizing the most powerful passages—the soliloquies and those scenes which give

free play to strength of soul, to elevation of spirit, and intensity, where Hamlet's troubled mind expresses itself with strong emotion. I also believed that I was really getting into the spirit of the part by somehow myself assuming the weight of his profound melancholy and, beneath this burden, following my model through the strange labyrinth of so many different moods and peculiar experiences. I learnt the part and tried it out, feeling that I was becoming more and more identified with my hero.

"But the further I progressed in this, the more difficult it became for me to perceive the structure of the whole, and finally I found it almost impossible to acquire an overview. So I went right through the play from beginning to end without skipping, and found that several things didn't fit together in my mind. At times the characters seemed to contradict each other, at times their speeches, and I well-nigh despaired of finding the right tone in which to act out the role as a whole with all its different nuances and deviations. I battled my way through this thicket for a long time without seeing a way out, until I finally found one particular path by which I thought I could reach my goal.

"I searched for any clues of Hamlet's character previous to the death of his father. I observed what this interesting young man had been like without reference to that sad event and its terrible consequences, and considered what he might have become without them.

"This sensitive, noble scion, this flower of kingship, grew up under the immediate influences of majesty; concepts of right and of princely dignity, the sense of what is good and what is seemly, developed in him simultaneously with an awareness of being born into high station. He was a prince, he was born a prince, and he was desirous of ruling so that good men should be unimpeded in the exercise of goodness. Winsome in appearance, courteous by nature, pleasing by temperament, he was fashioned to be a model for youth and a delight for everybody.

"Without being strikingly passionate, his love for Ophelia represented a gentle premonition of tender needs. His ardor for knightly activities was not entirely of his own making, for this desire had been sharpened and increased by the praise expended on another person. He had a clear sense of honesty in others and treasured the peace accorded to a sincere heart by the affection of a friend. To some extent he had learnt to respect and cherish what is good and beautiful in art and learning. He disliked anything that had no substance or taste, and when he developed real hatred it was only so that he could express his contempt for shifty, deceitful courtiers and have his mocking sport with them. He was by temperament detached, straightforward in behavior, and neither comfortable with idleness nor too desirous for activity. At court he continued his academic sauntering. His moods were more joyous than his heart, he was a good companion, forbearing, unassuming, and concerned. He could forgive and forget an insult, but he would never accept anyone who overstepped the bounds of what is good, right and proper.

“When we shall have read the play again, you will be able to judge if I am on the right track. At least I shall hope to be able to support my opinions by passages in the text.”

His presentation received hearty approval; they all thought they could now understand how the actions of Hamlet might be explained. They were delighted to feel that they had really entered the mind of the author. Each of them decided to study some play or other in this way, and discover the author’s meaning.

Chapter Four

They only stayed a few days in this place; nevertheless various members of the company became involved in adventures that were far from unpleasant. In particular Laertes, who was attracted by a lady with an estate in the neighborhood, but treated her so coldly and rudely that he had to suffer many a taunt from Philine. She took the occasion to tell Wilhelm about the unfortunate love affair that had turned this poor young man into an enemy of the whole female sex. “Who can blame him,” she said, “for hating a sex which treated him so badly and made him imbibe in one concentrated draft all the evils that men have to fear from women? Just imagine: within the space of one day he was lover, fiancé, husband, cuckold, patient and widower! I don’t know how he could have fared worse.”

Laertes ran from the room, half laughing and half irritated. Then Philine began in her most endearing way to tell how, as a young man of eighteen, Laertes had just joined a company of actors when he met a beautiful girl of fourteen. She was about to leave with her father, who had had some disagreement with the director. Laertes instantly fell head over heels in love with her and used every persuasion to induce her father to stay. Finally he promised to marry the girl. After a few pleasant hours of courtship he was married, spent one happy night as a husband, but while he was at a rehearsal next day, was cuckolded in accordance with his station. Having rushed home much too early in an access of loving desire, he found to his dismay a previous lover in his place, set about him in a fit of uncontrolled rage, challenged both the lover and the girl’s father, and received in the process a considerable wound. Father and daughter took themselves off during the night, and Laertes remained behind, doubly wounded. For his misfortune brought him into the hands of the worst surgeon in the world, and the poor chap emerged with black teeth and dripping eyes. He is to be pitied, for he is really the best fellow on earth. What grieves me most, is that the poor fool now hates all women: and how can you live if you hate women?”

Melina interrupted them to report that everything was ready to go, and that they could leave next morning. He produced a plan of how they should arrange themselves for the journey.

"If a good friend takes me on his lap," said Philine, "I am quite satisfied with our miserably cramped position and indifferent to everything else."

"I don't care," said Laertes who had come back and joined them.

"I find it tiresome," said Wilhelm and hurried off to secure, with his own money, another fairly comfortable carriage which Melina had refused to provide. A different seating arrangement was worked out, everybody was feeling happy at being able to travel in comfort, when the ominous news arrived that a gang of partisan soldiers had been spotted on the route they were about to take, and no good was to be expected from them.

In the town great attention was paid to this news, even though it was hazy and uncertain. Given the positions of the opposing armies, it seemed impossible that an enemy detachment could have crept through or that friendly troops stayed back so far. But the townsfolk vividly described the dangers attending the actors, and urged them to take another route. Most of the company became uneasy and fearful, and in accordance with their new republican constitution all of them were then assembled to discuss this extraordinary turn of events. They were almost unanimously of the opinion that they should avoid a calamity either by remaining where they were, or by taking another route. But Wilhelm, who did not share their fears, insisted that it would be disgraceful to abandon a plan they had arrived at after much consideration, simply because of a mere rumor. He urged them to take courage, and his reasoning was manly and convincing.

"This is still only a rumor," he said, "common enough in wartime. Sensible people say that this eventuality is highly unlikely and perhaps impossible. Should we therefore allow ourselves to be swayed in such an important matter by such vague talk? The route the count proposed is the one that our papers are made out for. It is the shortest route, and the best road. It leads us to the town where you have friends and acquaintances and can expect to be treated well. The detour would get us there too; but it will take us a long way out of our course and on sideroads in heaven knows what condition! How can we hope, at this late season, to find our way back on to the direct route—and just think of the time and money we will have wasted in the meantime!" He said a lot more, and pointed out so many advantages, that their fears were diminished and their courage increased. He was able to tell them so much about the discipline of the regular troops, and paint such a lamentable picture of the marauders and accrued rabble, even presenting the danger so amusingly and attractively that their spirits were all fired up.

Laertes was from the start on Wilhelm's side, and swore that he would not flinch or yield. The old Blusterer expressed similar sentiments in his own way, Philine laughed at the whole crew, and when Madame Melina, showing her usual spirit despite her advanced pregnancy, declared that the whole thing was heroic, her husband, hoping to save a packet by taking the shorter route, expressed no objections, and the proposal was heartily approved.

They then began to make preparations to defend themselves, should that prove to be necessary. They bought large bowie knives and slung them across their shoulders. Wilhelm supplemented these by two pistols which he stuck in his belt, and Laertes brought a good musket. So they set out in a state of high exaltation.

On the second day the drivers, who were well acquainted with the district, proposed that they should stop at midday on a wooded hilltop because the village was quite a way off and on such fine days this was what most people did. The weather was indeed beautiful, and everyone soon agreed to this. Wilhelm went ahead on foot through the hills, and everyone he encountered was amazed by his strange appearance. He surged ahead through the forest, happy and contented, with Laertes, whistling, behind him; only the women stayed in the carriages. Mignon ran alongside, proud of her bowie knife, which no one could refuse her when, after all, the whole company was arming itself. Around her hat she had put the beads which Wilhelm still kept as a memento of Mariane. The blond Friedrich carried Laertes's musket. The Harper displayed an expression of perfect peace. His long garment was hitched up into his belt so that he could walk more freely, and he was supporting himself on a knobby staff, his instrument having been left behind in the carriage.

With some difficulty they finally reached the top of the hill, recognized the place from the beautiful stand of beech trees that surrounded and shaded it. A large and inviting forest glade sloped down from it gently and made this a pleasant place to rest. A running brook would quench their thirst, and off to the other side they had a marvelous view across ravines and ridges of trees into a distance full of hope and expectancy. Villages and mills could be seen in the valleys, towns in the plain, and more hills in the far distance. This made the prospect all the more promising because those hills constituted only a minor obstacle in their path.

The first persons who arrived took possession of the area, lay down in the shade, started to build a fire, and waited for the others who came up one after the other and, with one voice, admired the lovely weather, this beautiful spot, and the splendid surroundings.

Chapter Five

Although they had spent many happy hours together indoors, they were all much more alive and alert when their minds were refreshed by the wide-open sky and the beauty of the landscape. Here they felt closer to each other and would have liked to spend their whole lives in such a delightful place. They envied the hunters, the charcoal burners and the woodsmen—all by their occupations tied to such agreeable locations. Most of all they envied the blissful indolence of gypsies reveling in the manifold delights of nature.

Indeed they were happy in the feeling that they had a certain kinship with such odd creatures.

By now the women were starting to boil potatoes, and to unpack and start cooking the food they had brought with them. Pots were put around the fire, and the whole company arranged itself beneath the trees and bushes. Their curious garments and their various weapons gave them an exotic appearance. The horses were led off to one side and fed, and if only the coaches could somehow have been concealed from view, our little group would have made a deceptively romantic impression.

Wilhelm was in a state of unusual delight, seeing himself as the leader of a nomadic tribe, and, with this in mind, talking to each and every one and building up this illusion of the moment into a thing of color and poetry. Feelings rose: they ate and drank, and joyfully declared again and again that they had never in their life experienced such a delightful time.

As the enjoyment increased, a desire for activity grew. Wilhelm and Laertes took up their rapiers and this time began to practice with a theatrical end in view. They wanted to perform the duel in which Hamlet and his opponent come to such a tragic end. Both of them were convinced that, in this important scene, one shouldn't just lunge back and forth clumsily, as happens in most theaters; they were hoping to provide a model of how one could make this scene into a spectacle that any knowledgeable fencer would respect. Everyone gathered round. They both fought with vigor and intelligence, and the interest of the spectators increased at every bout.

Suddenly a shot landed in a nearby bush, and before long there was another. The group dispersed in fright. Soon they noticed armed men advancing toward the place near the loaded coaches where the horses were being fed.

The women burst into a cry of alarm, and our two heroes threw down their foils, seized their pistols and rushed at the attackers, demanding an explanation of what was going on, and accompanying this by violent threats. When these were answered laconically by several musket shots, Wilhelm fired his pistol at a curlyhead who had climbed up on the carriage and was cutting the ropes around the luggage. It was a good shot and the fellow fell off immediately. Laertes had been similarly successful, and the two men, encouraged by this, were taking to their sidearms when part of the attacking force descended on them with curses and bellowings, fired a few shots, and came at them with glittering sabres. Our two heroes fought valiantly, and called on the others to prepare for a general defense. But soon after this Wilhelm lost all sight and consciousness of what was happening. Stunned by a shot that hit him between his chest and his left arm, and by a sabre-thrust that split his hat and almost penetrated his skull, he fell down and later had to learn the unfortunate end of this encounter from someone else.

When he came to, he found himself in the strangest position. The first thing he dimly perceived, was Philine's face bent over his. He felt weak, and when he tried to get up, he found he was lying in Philine's lap, and sank back again.

She was sitting on the grass, gently nestling the head of the prostrate youth, giving him in her arms as soft a bed as she could. Mignon was kneeling at his feet, fondling them and weeping over them, her hair tousled and soaked in blood.

When Wilhelm saw the blood on his own clothes he feebly asked where he was and what had happened to him and the others. Philine urged him not to exert himself: all the others were safe, she said, only he and Laertes were wounded. She did not want to say any more, and implored him to keep still because his wounds had been bandaged in great haste and not very well. He stretched out his hand to Mignon and inquired why there was blood on her hair: he feared that she too had been wounded.

To put his mind at rest, Philine told him that this good-hearted creature, on seeing her friend wounded, could not think of any other way, in the heat of the moment, to staunch the blood than by stopping the wound with her hair, though she soon realized the futility of this, and gave up. After that they bound up his wounds with sponges and moss; Philine had contributed her scarf.

Wilhelm noticed that she was leaning with her back against her trunk which appeared to be locked and quite undamaged. He asked whether the others had been as lucky in preserving their possessions. With a shrug of her shoulders, she pointed to the adjoining meadow, which was littered with broken boxes, smashed trunks, slashed knapsacks and every kind of small utensil. No one was to be seen. The strange little group was all alone.

Wilhelm soon found out more of what he wanted to know. The other men, who certainly could have offered some resistance, were soon so overwhelmed by fright, that they were easily overcome. Some of them had fled, others just looked in horror at what was happening. The drivers of the carriages, who, because of their horses, fought the most vigorously of all were nevertheless overpowered and tied up, and in a very short while everything was ransacked and the loot taken away. Our terrified travelers, once they no longer feared for their lives, began to lament their losses, and hastened as quickly as possible to the neighboring village, taking Laertes with them, who was only slightly wounded, as well as the slender remains of their possessions. The Harper had left his damaged instrument leaning against a tree, and gone with them to find a surgeon to care for his benefactor, who had been left there for dead.

Chapter Six

Our three unfortunate adventurers remained for a while in this strange situation, for no one came to their aid. Evening came and night was threatening to close in on them at any moment. Philine's calm began to change into agitation; Mignon kept running up and down, her impatience increasing with every moment. Finally their hopes were fulfilled and people were heard approaching. But they were assailed by new fears; they quite distinctly heard horses

coming up the path they had arrived by, and were afraid that some new party of uninvited guests was about to return to the battlefield for extra pickings. But they were pleasantly surprised when out of the bushes came a lady mounted on a white horse, accompanied by an oldish man and several young gentlemen, with servants and attendants, and a troupe of hussars to follow.

Philine stared at this sight, and was about to call out to the lovely Amazon for help, when the lady herself turned her eyes in astonishment toward this strange group of three people, and rode up to them. She showed great concern for the wounded man, whose position in the lap of this light-hearted samaritan, seemed to her extremely peculiar.

"Is he your husband?" she asked Philine. "No, just a good friend," Philine replied in a tone of voice that was extremely distasteful to Wilhelm. His eyes were fixed on the gentle, distinguished, calm and compassionate features of the newcomer: he thought he had never seen anything more beautiful or noble. Her figure was concealed beneath a man's loose overcoat which she seemed to have borrowed from one of the attendants as a protection against the cool night air.

The horsemen had meantime also drawn nearer. Some of them dismounted, and so did the lady who inquired most compassionately about the circumstances of the accident, and more particularly about the wounds of the prostrate youth. She then turned quickly around, and went off to the side, back to the carriages that had slowly come up the hill and now arrived at the battleground.

She stood by the door of one of the coaches, talking for a while with those who had just reached the top; a rather thick-set man stepped out and was led by her to our wounded warrior. From the box that he held in his hand and a leather case with instruments that he was carrying, it was clear that he was a surgeon. His manner was brusque rather than ingratiating, but his hand was skilled and his assistance welcome. He examined Wilhelm carefully and declared that none of his wounds was serious, that he would dress them, and then they could take him to the next village.

The lady's anxiety seemed to be increasing. "Just look," she said, having walked up and down a few times, and fetched the old man again, "Look what they have done to him, and this all on our account!" Wilhelm listened to what she said, but without understanding it. She kept pacing up and down, as though she were unable to tear herself away from the sight of the wounded man, and yet afraid of offending against decorum by staying while they began to undress him. The surgeon had just cut open Wilhelm's left sleeve when the old man came up to her and, in a serious tone of voice, insisted that they continue their journey. Wilhelm had his eyes fixed on hers and was so taken with their expression that he hardly felt what was being done to him.

Philine rose to kiss the lady's hand. As the two of them stood side by side, Wilhelm thought he had never seen such a difference. Philine had never appeared to him in so unfavorable a light. She should not even approach such

a noble creature—so it seemed to him—let alone touch her. The lady asked Philine various things, but in a low tone of voice. Then she turned to the old gentleman, who was still standing by unmoved, and said: “Dear Uncle, may I be generous on your account?” With that she took off the greatcoat, with the clear intention of covering the wounded and undressed man.

Wilhelm, captivated till then by the healing power of her glance, was now, once the greatcoat was off, amazed at the beauty of her figure. She came up and gently put the coat over him. When he opened his mouth to murmur some words of thanks, the vivid impression of her presence had the strangest effect on his impaired senses. Her head seemed to be surrounded by shafts of light and there was a glow spreading across her whole appearance. The surgeon was at that moment treating him rather less gently, he was about to extract the bullet that was still lodged in the wound. So the saint disappeared from his fainting sight: he lost all consciousness, and when he came to again, the horsemen and carriages, the beautiful lady and her attendants had all vanished into thin air.

Chapter Seven

When Wilhelm’s wounds had been attended to and his clothes put back on, the surgeon left just as the Harper returned with several of the country-folk. They made a stretcher out of twigs and branches, carefully laid the wounded man on it, and carried him slowly down the hill under the direction of a cavalier on horseback whom the lady had left behind to be with them. The Harper, pensive and silent, carried his damaged instrument, others dragged down Philine’s trunk, she herself sauntering after them with a bundle in her hands, Mignon running ahead or into the bushes, gazing back longingly at her sick protector.

He lay quiet on his bier, wrapped in the warm overcoat. Electric warmth seemed to be penetrating his body from the fine wool, and he felt transported into a state of extreme comfort. The beautiful owner of that garment had made a strong impression on him. He could still see the coat slipping from her shoulders, her noble form surrounded by shafts of light; and his spirit rushed through forests and crags in pursuit.

It was not until nightfall that the little procession reached the village and stopped in front of the inn where the rest of the company were staying, desperately lamenting their irreplaceable losses. The only parlor in the hostelry was jammed with people, some were lying on the straw, some spread over the benches, some squeezed behind the stove, and Madame Melina in a neighboring room awaiting her delivery, which had been brought on rather earlier than expected because of that frightening occurrence. As a result she was being assisted by the hostess of the inn, an inexperienced young woman from whom not much good was to be expected.

When the new arrivals demanded to be let in, there was general complaining. They said that it was solely on Wilhelm's advice and under his direction that they had chosen to take this dangerous route and exposed themselves to this misfortune, the consequences of which were entirely his fault. They prevented his being let in and told him to find accommodation elsewhere. Philine they treated still more shabbily; and even the Harper and Mignon had to suffer their part. But the cavalier assigned by the fine lady to look after these three unfortunate creatures soon lost all patience, cursed and swore at the whole lot of them, and ordered them to close up and make room for the new arrivals. At this they began to be more accommodating. He made a place for Wilhelm on one of the tables which he pushed into a corner. Philine had her trunk put down beside him, and firmly sat down on it. Everybody squeezed up as much as they could; and the cavalier went off to see if he could not find better quarters for the "married couple."

Anger and reproaches broke out again as soon as he left. Everyone reckoned up, and exaggerated, his losses. They objected to the foolhardiness which had cost them so dearly, and did not conceal their gleeful satisfaction at our friend's being wounded. They vented their scorn on Philine, claiming that the way she had prevented any damage being done to her trunk was absolutely criminal. From various gibes and personal remarks it was clear that, during the looting, she had worked her way into the good graces of the leader of the band of marauders and persuaded him by her craftiness or the bestowal of some favors, to let her have her trunk back. For a while she seemed to have been missing. She did not reply to these allegations, but sat clicking the heavy locks of her trunk to assure her enemies that it was still there and to make them even more furious at her good fortune.

Chapter Eight

Wilhelm, though weak from loss of so much blood and calm and peaceful since the appearance of his angel of mercy, could not fail to be irritated by the harsh and unjust words that these disgruntled people kept repeating while he maintained silence. Eventually, however, he felt strong enough to rise and reproach them for the ill-mannered way in which they were causing anxiety to their friend and leader. He lifted his bandaged head, and supporting himself by leaning against the wall, he said:

"I can forgive your insulting me, when you should be sorry for me, and opposing and rejecting me the first time that I might expect your assistance—I can forgive that as the painful result of the losses you have suffered. Up till now I have felt sufficiently rewarded for the service I have done you and the kindness I have shown you, by your friendly behavior toward me. Don't mislead me, don't force me to go back in my mind and add up all I have done for you, for any such reckoning could only cause me pain. Chance led me to you,

circumstance and inclination have kept me with you. I have shared your work and shared your pleasures. What little knowledge I had, was placed at your service. If you now cast bitter reproaches on me as being responsible for the misfortune that has befallen us, you are forgetting that it was not one of us who first proposed we should take this route, and that you all discussed this and gave your approval, as I myself did. If our journey had turned out well, you would all have been proud at having proposed that we take this route in preference to any other, and remembered our discussion, and the vote we took. But now you put the whole blame, the entire responsibility, on me, and this I cannot accept because my conscience is clear and you were as much involved as I was. If you have anything to say, then speak out, and I will defend myself. If you have nothing to accuse me of, hold your peace, and stop tormenting me just when I need all the rest I can get."

The reaction of the girls to this was to start crying again and describing their losses in detail. Melina was quite beside himself, for he had suffered the heaviest losses—more than we can imagine. He was storming about and stumbling in the narrow room, hitting his head against the wall, cursing and swearing in a most unseemly manner, and when, just then, the hostess came out with the news that his wife had given birth to a stillborn child, he lapsed into outbursts of violence, and everyone howled, yelled, growled, and contributed to the general uproar.

Wilhelm was consumed by sincere pity at their situation, but also by disgust at their pettiness; his mind was fully alert even though his body was still weak. "I almost despise you," he said, "pitiful as your situation may be. For no misfortune can justify heaping reproaches so unjustly on an innocent man. If I did have a part in the mistake we made, I too am paying for it. Here I lie, wounded, and if you all have had losses, I have lost the most. The costumes and sets that were looted, belonged to me; you, Melina, have still not paid me, but I release you forthwith from this obligation."

"What's the point of giving away what no one will ever see again?" said Melina. "Your money was in my wife's trunk, and it is your fault that you lost it. But if only that were all!" Then he began again to stamp and swear and shout. Everybody remembered the lovely clothes they had acquired from the count, the buckles, the snuff boxes, the watches and hats that Melina had wheedled out of the valet de chambre. Everyone remembered his own particular small articles of value, and they all looked in irritation at Philine's trunk, indicating to Wilhelm that he had not done so badly to associate with this beauty and through her good fortune save his own possessions.

"Do you really believe that I shall keep anything for myself, while you are in need?" Wilhelm cried. "Is this the first time that I have given you a fair share of what I had? Open the trunk, and let what is mine be used for general needs." "The trunk is *mine*," said Philine, "and I will not open it up until I decide I want to. The few gladrags which I've kept for you, won't bring in much even if you sell them to the most honest of Jews. Think of yourself, what

it might cost to get you well again, and what might happen to you in some other part of the country.”

“Philine,” said Wilhelm, “you will not deprive me of anything that belongs to me, and such as it is, it will get us out of our first difficulties. But there are many ways of helping one’s friends, and not all of them depend on the glitter of money. Everything in and of me shall be spent on these unfortunate people who will certainly regret their present behavior, once they come to their senses. Yes,” he said, “I know what you all need, and I will do my best to help you. Give me once more your confidence, calm yourselves for the present, and accept what I can promise you. Who will take this from me in the name of all of you?”

He stretched out his hand, and said: “I promise not to desert or abandon you until every one of you has had his losses doubly or three times repaid, and until you have totally forgotten the state you are now in (no matter whose fault it is) and have exchanged it for a better one.”

He kept his hand extended, but no one grasped it. “I repeat my promise,” he said, falling back on his pillows. Everyone remained silent. They were ashamed but not consoled. And Philine sat on her trunk cracking nuts that she had found in her pocket.

Chapter Nine

The cavalier came back with some others, ready to make preparations to move the wounded man. The village pastor had been persuaded to take in the “married couple.” Philine’s trunk was carried out and she, quite naturally but in a seemingly manner, followed after it. Mignon ran ahead, and when they reached the parsonage, Wilhelm was put into a good-sized double bed that had long been used for guests or persons of distinction. It was only then that they noticed that the wound had broken open. There had been a good deal of bleeding and a new bandage was needed. Wilhelm became feverish. Philine nursed him dutifully and when she was overcome by fatigue, her place was taken by the Harper. Mignon was determined to stay awake, but had fallen asleep in a corner.

In the morning, when Wilhelm had somewhat recovered, he learnt from the gentleman that the lady who had come to their assistance the preceding day, had recently left her estate in order to escape the turmoil of war and withdrawn to a quieter part till peace should return. He told Wilhelm that the elderly gentleman was her uncle, that they had gone first to a certain town, and that they had instructed him to take good care of Wilhelm and his companions.

At that moment the surgeon came in and cut short Wilhelm’s expression of gratitude to the gentleman. He described the wounds in detail and assured Wilhelm that they would soon heal, if he would keep absolutely quiet and be patient.

When the cavalier had gone, Philine told Wilhelm he had left in her charge a purse with twenty gold pieces, had given the parson a sweetening in return for the accommodation and left money with him to pay for the surgeon's services. She herself was generally taken to be Wilhelm's wife, would always act as such in his presence, and would not allow anyone else to nurse him.

"Philine," said Wilhelm, "I am already indebted to you for what you have done in all the misfortune that has befallen us, but I would not wish to increase my obligations toward you. I am ill at ease when you are with me, for I do not know how to repay what you are doing for me. Give me back those things of mine that you rescued for me in your trunk, join up with the rest of the company, and look for some other place to stay. Accept my thanks and, as a small recognition, my gold watch. But leave me. Your presence disturbs me more than you know."

She laughed in his face when he stopped talking. "What a fool you are!" she said. "You'll never be sensible. I know better what's good for you. I'm going to stay right here. I won't move from the spot. I've never expected thanks from men, and not from you either. And if I love you, what's that to you?"

She did stay, and soon ingratiated herself with the pastor and his family; she was bright and cheerful, always giving little presents, knowing exactly what to say to everyone—and doing exactly what she pleased. Wilhelm did not feel too bad. The surgeon, not very knowledgeable but not unskillful, let nature take its course, and the patient was soon on his way to recovery. He was eager to be fully restored so that he could continue with what he had planned, and fulfill his ambitions.

Time and time again he recalled the incident which had left such an indelible impression on his mind. He saw the lovely Amazon riding out of the bushes, saw her come towards him, get off her horse, walk up and down, and occupy herself with his needs. He saw the coat falling from her shoulders, her face and figure disappearing in a blaze of light. All his youthful visions returned to his mind and associated themselves with this image. He now thought he had seen the heroic Clorinda with his own eyes; and he also remembered the sick prince with the beautiful loving princess approaching his bed. "Do not images of our future destiny appear before our unclouded eyes in the dreams of our youth as premonitions?" he kept saying to himself, "Is it not possible that Fate sows the seeds of what is later to befall us, a foretaste of the fruits we are later to enjoy?"

His sickbed allowed him ample time to relive the scene. A thousand times he recalled the sweet sound of her voice; and how he envied Philine at having been able to kiss her hand! At times the whole incident seemed a dream, and he would have considered it a fantasy if the coat were not still there to assure him of the reality of the apparition. The care he took of this garment he combined with a passionate desire to wear it; and whenever he got up from his bed, he hung it over his shoulder, fearing all day long that he might get a spot on it, or in some way damage it.

Chapter Ten

Laertes came to visit his friend. He had not witnessed that turbulent scene in the inn, he had been in an upstairs room. He was quite dispassionate about his losses, resorting to his usual reaction of: What does it matter? He recounted the ridiculous behavior of the other members of the company, chiding Madame Melina in particular and saying that the only reason she lamented the loss of her daughter, was that now she would not be able to christen her with the ancient teutonic name Mechtilde. As for her husband, it had become clear that he had plenty of money and did not need the advance which he had wheedled out of Wilhelm. He was intending to leave by the next postchaise, and would be asking Wilhelm for a letter of recommendation to his friend Serlo, the director of the theater, whose company he hoped to join, now that his own venture had collapsed.

Mignon had for several days been very quiet, and when asked why, she finally admitted that she had sprained her right arm. "That's the result of your foolhardiness," said Philine, and then related how the child had drawn her knife in the middle of the fight, and when she saw her friend in danger, had slashed at the assailants. Eventually she had been grabbed by the arm and hurled to the ground. They scolded her for not telling them sooner that she was hurt, but they had noticed that she was afraid of the surgeon who all this time had taken her for a boy. They tried to relieve the pain by putting her arm in a sling. But her discomfort increased, because she now had to leave the better part of nursing and caring for Wilhelm to Philine, and that engaging sinner was becoming daily more attentive, and more active.

One morning when Wilhelm awoke, he found himself in curious proximity to Philine. In the restlessness of his sleep he had moved way back in the big, wide bed and Philine was stretched out across the front of it. It seemed that she had been sitting reading, and had fallen asleep. A book had slipped from her hand, and her head was resting against his chest, her blond hair billowing loosely across it. The disorder created by sleep had increased her charms more than art or intention could have done, and a smiling, childlike peace was spread over her face. He looked at her for a while, reproaching himself, so it seemed, for the pleasure this gave him; and we cannot say whether he blessed or blamed the situation that imposed such immobility and moderation upon him. He had been looking at her closely for some time when she began to move. He closed his eyes quietly, but couldn't resist blinking. He peered at her as she tidied herself up and went off to inquire about breakfast.

All the actors had by now come to see Wilhelm, asking for recommendations and travel expenses with various degrees of rudeness and importunateness, all to Philine's disapproval. In vain did she inform Wilhelm that the gentleman had left the other actors quite a sum, and that Wilhelm was being cheated. They even got into a fierce argument about this, with Wilhelm insisting once again that she should go along with them and try her luck with Serlo.

Her even temper deserted her for a brief span, but then she recovered herself, and said: "If only I had my blond friend with me! Then I wouldn't have to bother about the whole lot of you!" She was referring to Friedrich, who had been missing since the encounter with the marauding soldiers and had not shown his face since.

The next morning Mignon brought the news to Wilhelm's bed that Philine had left during the night, having neatly arranged in the next room everything that belonged to him. He felt her absence: he had lost in her a faithful nurse and a lively companion, and he was no longer used to being alone. But Mignon was soon to fill the gap.

Since the time that frivolous beauty had begun to bestow on Wilhelm her friendly ministrations, the little girl had withdrawn more and more and kept quietly to herself. But now that the coast was clear again, she came forth with all her love and attentiveness, anxious to serve and eager to entertain.

Chapter Eleven

Wilhelm was making good progress toward recovery, and hoped in a few days to be able to proceed on his journey. He did not want to continue drifting through life without a plan; his path into the future was now to be measured with purposeful steps. The first thing he wanted to do, was to seek out that gracious lady who had come to his assistance, and thank her; then hasten to his friend the theater director and do what he could for the unfortunate actors, and at the same time call on those businessmen whose addresses he had been given, to carry out his instructions. He hoped that the same good fortune would attend him as previously, and that he would have an opportunity to compensate himself by some favorable speculation or other for his losses and repair his finances.

The desire to see again the lady who had rescued him grew stronger every day, and in order to decide on his route he sought advice from the pastor, who had excellent topographical and statistical knowledge and owned quite a collection of books and maps. Together they looked for the place where the lady's family had settled during the war and tried to get more information about her; but they couldn't find the place on any map or in any gazetteer, and the genealogical handbooks had nothing to say about the family.

Wilhelm became uneasy at this, and when he expressed his concern, the Harper said that he had cause to believe that the cavalier, for some reason or other, had concealed the lady's true name. Feeling that he was after all somewhere near her, and eager to have news of her, Wilhelm dispatched the Harper to see what he could find out. But his hopes were soon dashed. For despite all his inquiries, the Harper could not find any trace of her. In those days people moved about easily; no one had paid any particular attention to a group of travelers, and the Harper was obliged to return, in order not to be taken for a

Jewish spy because of his beard; but had no good news to report to his master. He gave a precise account of how he had tried to carry out his mission, being eager that no suspicion of negligence should be attached to him. He did all he could to alleviate Wilhelm's concern, reminding himself of everything that the cavalier had told him, and advancing various theories, until finally one particular matter came to light which enabled Wilhelm to understand some of her words which had puzzled him.

The robber band had not been lying in wait for the actors but for her, on whom they might well expect to find a considerable amount of money and jewels. They must have had prior knowledge of her movements. It was not known whether the attack was the work of volunteer soldiers, or of marauders or robbers. Be that as it may, it was fortunate for the rich entourage of the lady that what these men came upon first were these poor creatures who were suffering the fate that was intended for the others. This was what the lady had been referring to by her words, "all on our account," which Wilhelm well remembered. Delighted as he was that Fate in its foresight had designated him to be sacrificed for the sake of this peerless woman, he was close to despair at having, at least for the moment, lost all hope of ever seeing her again.

The commotion within him was aggravated by the curious fact that he had discovered a striking resemblance between the countess and his *belle incon- nue*. They were as alike as two sisters, neither older than the other, but, seemingly, twins.

The memory of the delightful countess was one of extreme sweetness: he took constant pleasure in recalling her image. But now the person of the noble Amazon had interposed itself, and the two images became one, so that he was quite unable to keep hold of the one and let go of the other. And then their handwriting—how similar that was! He had kept a charming poem that the countess had written in her own hand, and in the overcoat he had found a slip of paper with a tender message of inquiry about the "uncle." Wilhelm was convinced that his rescuer had written this, sent it from one room to another in some inn on the way, and that the uncle had put it in his pocket. He compared the handwriting, and whereas the elegant pen strokes of the countess had especially pleased him beforehand, the similar but freer writing of the Unknown One now seemed inexpressibly fluid and harmonious. Her little note said next to nothing, but its very appearance, like previously that of the lady herself, seemed to set his spirits soaring.

He lapsed into a state of dreamy longing; and the passionate expressiveness of the free duet that Mignon and the Harper were singing, was like an echo of what he himself was feeling:

Only they know my pain
Who know my yearning!
Parted and lone again,
All joy unlearning,

I scan all heaven's demesne
For any turning.
Ah, but my love and swain—
Far he's sojourning.
Hot is my spinning brain,
My insides burning.
Only they know my pain
Who know my yearning!

Chapter Twelve

The gentle enticements of his kindly tutelary spirit did not move Wilhelm in any particular direction; they merely increased his former uneasiness. There was a certain warmth coursing secretly through his veins, definite and indefinite images floated before his mind and aroused desires that had no limit. He might wish for a horse, or wings, but although he felt he could not stay as he was, he was constantly trying to decide what he really wanted.

The thread of his destiny had become strangely entangled and he longed for the knots to be untied or cut. Many times, hearing a horse trot by or a carriage rumble on its way, he rushed to look out of the window, in the hope that it might be someone coming to visit him and, by pure chance, bringing him news that was certain, and happy. He regaled himself with thoughts of how Werner might surprise him by coming to these parts; or Mariane might turn up. He became excited every time he heard a post horn. Melina should be sending him news of how things were going with him, and above all the cavalier might return with an invitation to visit his idolized beauty.

Unfortunately none of this happened, and he was thrown back on his own company. As he thought over the past, one thing became ever more distasteful and intolerable, the more he pondered and reflected on it. This was his disastrous leadership in battle, the very remembrance of which filled him with dismay. For although, on the evening of that fateful day, he had made a pretty good show of talking himself out of any responsibility, he could not persuade himself that this was justified. He even had moments of depression in which he blamed himself for everything that had happened.

Self-love makes us exaggerate our faults as much as our virtues. He had inspired confidence in himself and manipulated the will of others; and he had forged ahead, driven by boldness and inexperience. But these were not sufficient to cope with the dangers that had befallen them. Openly and in the depths of his heart he blamed himself time and time again, and since he had promised not to desert the company he had so misled until he repaid with interest what they had lost, he now had a further indiscretion to reproach himself with, namely that of assuming responsibility for redressing the harm that had been done to all of them. There were times when he rebuked himself for

giving such a promise in the excitement and pressure of the moment; at others he felt that his kindly extended helping hand, which no one was ready to accept, was a mere formal gesture compared with the vow he had made in his heart. He tried to think of ways to be useful and generous, and decided there was every reason for him to speed up his journey to Serlo. So he packed his things and, without being fully recovered or consulting either the pastor or the surgeon, hurried off in the company of Mignon and the Harper, eager to escape the inactivity that fate had imposed on him for so long.

Chapter Thirteen

Serlo received him with open arms, and said: "Is it really you? Are you still what you were? You don't seem to have changed much. Have you retained your passionate love for the noblest of all the arts? I am so glad you have come, and the mistrust I felt in your recent letters has completely vanished." Wilhelm was puzzled, and asked for an explanation. "You didn't treat me like an old friend when you wrote, but rather as an important person to whom one can, in good conscience, recommend people who are completely useless. Our whole future depends on the opinion of the public, and I'm afraid that Mr. Melina and his associates are hardly the sort of people we can integrate into our troupe."

Wilhelm was about to say something in their favor, but Serlo launched into such a harsh description of them, that Wilhelm was glad when a woman entered the room, whom Serlo introduced as his sister Aurelie. She received him very graciously, and their conversation was so pleasant that he did not really notice a certain sadness in her intelligent face which made it all the more interesting.

This was the first time for a long while that Wilhelm had really felt in his element. Whereas all he usually had were submissive listeners, he now found himself in the enviable position of talking to artists and connoisseurs who not only understood him perfectly but responded intelligently to what he said. With what speed they went through all the latest plays! What surety of judgment they displayed! How well they could estimate and appreciate how the public would react! How quickly they could explain things to each other!

Wilhelm's admiration for Shakespeare necessarily brought their conversation round to this author, and Wilhelm expressed his expectation that Shakespeare's marvelous plays would have a tremendous effect on the German public. He soon got on to *Hamlet*, which had so much occupied him of late.

Serlo assured him that he would have put on the play long ago if that had been possible, and he himself would have liked to play the part of Polonius. He added with a smile: "And we can find Ophelias, once we have the prince!" Wilhelm did not notice that Aurelie seemed displeased by her brother's jocular remark; instead he lapsed into his usual expansiveness, instructing them on how he would require the part of Hamlet to be played. He laid before them in

detail the conclusions which we have seen him arrive at, and did all he could to make his opinions acceptable, despite the doubts that Serlo expressed regarding his hypothesis. "All right," said Serlo, "we'll grant you all that. But what else does it explain?"

"A great deal; in fact, everything," said Wilhelm. "Just imagine a prince as I have described him, whose father dies unexpectedly. Ambition and desire to rule are not his driving passions. He had acquiesced in the fact of being the son of a king, but now for the first time he is obliged to be more aware of the gulf that separates commoner from king. His right to the crown was not hereditary, but his father's long life had strengthened the claims of an only son and his hopes of assuming the crown. But now he sees himself, despite virtual promises, excluded, perhaps for ever, by his uncle, and feels so deprived of grace and possessions, so alienated amidst all that from the time of his youth he had considered his own. This is how his mind first takes on a melancholy cast. He feels that he is no more than all the other nobles—indeed not as much. He considers himself their servant, he is neither polite, nor condescending but feels degraded and destitute.

"His earlier state now seems to him like a vanished dream. In vain does his uncle try to cheer him up and make him take a different view of his situation; his feeling of insignificance never leaves him.

"The second blow that he suffers, is even more wounding and humbling—his mother's marriage. When his father died, this faithful, loving son still had a mother; and he hoped to honor with her the memory of the great man who had departed this life. But now he loses his mother as well, and in a fashion worse than if she had been snatched from him by death. The image of reliability, which every loving child likes to attach to his parents, is suddenly gone: no help from the dead, no support from the living. She is a woman, and: 'Frailty, thy name is woman.'

"He now feels really dejected and isolated. No worldly joys can replace what he has lost. As he is not melancholy or pensive by nature, grief and contemplation are now a heavy burden. That's how he appears when we first see him. I do not believe I have read anything into the play that is not there, or overstressed any element in it."

Serlo looked at his sister, and said: "Was I wrong in the way I described our friend? He has just made a good beginning, and he will have much more to tell us about, and persuade us of." Wilhelm swore that his intentions were not to persuade, but to convince; and he asked for a few more moments of their time.

"Just to think clearly about this young man, this son of a prince," Wilhelm went on to say. "Visualize his position, and observe him when he learns that his father's spirit is abroad. Stand by him when, in that terrible night, the venerable ghost appears before his eyes. He is overcome by intense horror, speaks to the spirit, sees it beckon him, follows, and hears—the terrible accusation of his uncle continues to ring in his ears, with its challenge to seek revenge, and that repeated urgent cry: 'Remember me!'

“And when the ghost has vanished, what do we see standing before us? A young hero thirsting for revenge? A prince by birth, happy to be charged with unseating the usurper of his throne? Not at all! Amazement and sadness descend on this lonely spirit; he becomes bitter at the smiling villains, swears not to forget his departed father, and ends with a heavy sigh: ‘The time is out of joint; O cursed spite! That ever I was born to set it right!’

“In these words, so I believe, lies the key to Hamlet’s whole behavior; and it is clear to me what Shakespeare set out to portray: a heavy deed placed on a soul which is not adequate to cope with it. And it is in this sense that I find the whole play constructed. An oak tree planted in a precious pot which should only have held delicate flowers. The roots spread out, the vessel is shattered.

“A fine, pure, noble and highly moral person, but devoid of that emotional strength that characterizes a hero, goes to pieces beneath a burden that it can neither support nor cast off. Every obligation is sacred to him, but this one is too heavy. The impossible is demanded of him—not the impossible in any absolute sense, but what is impossible for him. How he twists and turns, trembles, advances and retreats, always being reminded, always reminding himself, and finally almost losing sight of his goal, yet without ever regaining happiness!”

Chapter Fourteen

Several persons came in and the conversation was interrupted. They were musicians accustomed to meet once every week at Serlo’s for an informal concert. He liked music very much and said that an actor could never achieve a true conception of his art, or the right feeling for it, without a love of music. “You act much more easily and appropriately when your movements are accompanied and controlled by music; and every actor should, as it were, compose his part in his mind, although it’s in prose, so that he doesn’t drool it out monotonously to his own tune, but modulates its tempo and rhythm.”

Aurelie appeared to be taking little interest in what was happening, and eventually led our friend into an adjoining room, where she walked up to the window, gazed at the starry sky, and said, “You still owe us more of your thoughts about *Hamlet*. I don’t want to be precipitate, and would like my brother to hear what you have to say, but do tell me what you think about Ophelia.”

“There is not much to say about her,” said Wilhelm. “Her character is presented in a few strokes of the master’s hand. Her whole being is pervaded by ripe, sweet sensuality. Her affection for the prince, whose hand she might justly feel she can claim, rises from the very wellsprings of her being, her heart abandons itself so completely to her desire that both her father and her brother are fearful for her and warn her openly. Her decorum, like the posy on her bosom, cannot conceal the perturbation of her heart—in fact it betrays

it. Her imagination is infected, her tender modesty nevertheless breathes desire and love, and if the obliging goddess of fortune should shake the tree, the fruit would fall."

"But when she sees herself rejected, repulsed and reviled," said Aurelie, "when the best turns to the worst in her lover's madness, and he hands her not the sweet goblet of love but the bitter cup of sorrow . . ."

"Then her heart breaks," said Wilhelm. "The whole frame of her existence falls out of joint, her father's death bursts in upon her, and the whole structure of her lovely being collapses."

Wilhelm had not noticed the intensity of expression with which Aurelie was speaking. His attention had been entirely concentrated on the perfect structure of the work of art, and he had no idea of the totally different way Aurelie was reacting to the character, or that some deep grief of her own was being awakened by this shadow play.

Her head was still resting on her arms, and her eyes, filled with tears, were still gazing upward. Finally she could no longer suppress her hidden anguish, and seizing his hands she said to him as he stood there in astonishment: "Forgive, o forgive my troubled heart! The company of others restricts and oppresses me. I have to try to hide my feelings from my unfeeling brother. But your presence has released me from all these restraints. I've only just met you, but you're someone in whom I can confide." Words almost failed her, and she sank on to his shoulder. "Don't think the worse of me," she said, sobbing, "for opening up to you so quickly, for appearing so weak. Be my friend, remain my friend—I deserve it!" He spoke to her compassionately, but without effect. Her tears continued to flow, and stifled her words.

At that moment Serlo came into the room, a most unwelcome interruption, and, totally unexpected, with Philine, whom he held by the hand. "Here's your friend," he said to her. "He will be glad to see you."

"Well!" said Wilhelm in astonishment. "How is it that I find you here?" Philine walked up to him, calmly and unassumingly, bade him welcome, and praised Serlo's kindness in taking her into his excellent troupe, not because of merit but simply in the expectation that she would develop. She acted in a friendly manner toward Wilhelm, though with a certain distance.

But this pretense only lasted while the other two were in the room. For when Aurelie left to hide her agitation and Serlo was called away, Philine first looked to the doors to see that both of them were well and truly gone, then jumped around like a mad thing, sat on the ground and almost choked with tittering laughter. Then she leapt up, said nice things to Wilhelm, and seemed exceedingly pleased at having gone ahead to reconnoitre the terrain and build her own nest.

"There's plenty going on here," she said. "Just what I like. Aurelie has had an unhappy love affair with a nobleman, who must be a splendid fellow. I would like to see him some day. If I am not mistaken, he has left her a little memento; there is a three-year-old boy running around here, pretty as the sun.

Papa must have been extremely nice. Usually I can't stand children, but this one appeals to me. I've reckoned it out. Her husband dies, then this new admirer, then the age of the child—everything fits.

"Her friend has gone his own way, and hasn't seen her for a whole year: She is beside herself and utterly inconsolable. Silly fool!—As for her brother, he has a dancer in the company that he makes up to, a little actress that he is intimate with, and several women that he courts in the town; and now I too am on the list. Poor fool!—As for the rest, I'll tell you about them tomorrow. But now a word about your dear friend Philine: the silly fool is in love with you!" She swore that this was true and was a real lark. She implored him to fall in love with Aurelie. "Then there'll be a real chase. She runs after her faithless lover, you after her, I after you, and the brother after me. If that isn't enough to keep us amused for six months, I am ready to die after the first episode in the fourfold complications of this romance." She begged him not to spoil her game, and show her as much respect as she would seek to earn by her public behavior.

Chapter Fifteen

The next morning Wilhelm decided to call on Madame Melina, but found she was not at home. He inquired after the other members of the company and learnt that Philine had invited them all to breakfast. He went there out of curiosity and found them all quite consoled and in very good spirits. The clever little creature had gathered them together, regaled them with chocolate, and given them to understand that all avenues were not closed: she hoped by her influence to convince the director of the advantages of having such proficient people in his company. They listened attentively, drank one cup of chocolate after another, decided that this girl was not all that bad and that they would speak well of her in the future.

"Do you really think," said Wilhelm when he was alone with Philine, "that Serlo will keep our comrades?" "Not at all," replied Philine. "As for me I don't particularly want him to. The sooner they leave, the better. Laertes is the only I would wish to keep; the others we can get rid of gradually."

She made it clear to her friend that she was convinced he should no longer bury his talents but go on the stage under Serlo's direction. She was full of praise for the organization, the taste and intelligence that were in evidence here, and spoke so flatteringly to Wilhelm about his talents that his heart and imagination were as near to accepting this proposal as his mind and his reason withdrew from it. He did not admit to himself nor to Philine where his inclinations were leading him, and spent a restless day, unable to decide whether to go to his father's business associate and collect the letters that were probably waiting there for him. He realized how uneasy his family must have become by now, but shied away from receiving a detailed account of their concern and

reproaches; he was looking forward to an evening of unsullied pleasure at the performance of a new play.

Serlo had refused to let him go to the rehearsal. "You must," he said, "get to know us at our very best before we allow you to see us in the planning stage."

Wilhelm was extremely satisfied with the performance which he attended next evening. It was the first time he had witnessed theater of such quality. One could see that all the actors had excellent talents, conducive dispositions and a clear and serious view of their art, and yet they were all different; they supported each other, inspired each other, and were exact and precise in every facet of their acting. One soon realized that Serlo was the soul of the enterprise and that he distinguished himself in it. The moment he stepped onto the stage and opened his mouth he revealed an admirably controlled mood, moderation in his actions, and a true sense of what was fitting, together with an exceptional mimetic talent. His inward composure radiated outward to the spectators, and the intelligent way in which he conveyed every nuance of the role delighted the audience because he was able to conceal the technique he had acquired by persistent practicing.

His sister Aurelie was just as good as he, and received even greater applause because she knew how to move hearts as well as to amuse and lighten them.

After Wilhelm had spent some days in this pleasant fashion, Aurelie one day asked to see him. He hastened to her room and found her lying on a couch. She seemed to be suffering from a headache, and could not hide the fact that she was in a state of feverish unrest. Her eyes brightened when she saw him. "Please forgive me!" she called out. "The confidence you have inspired in me, has made me weak. Up till now I have been able to occupy myself, when I was alone, with my sorrows. They provided me with strength and consolation. But now, I don't know how, you have loosened the bonds of my silence, and you will now unwittingly be a party to the battle I am fighting with myself."

Wilhelm responded with kindness and courtesy, assuring her that her person and her sorrow were constantly before his mind, and urging her to confide in him so that he might be able to become her friend.

While he was speaking, he noticed the little boy sitting on the floor and playing with all sorts of toys. He was, as Philine had said, probably about three years of age, and Wilhelm now well understood why the flippant girl, whose manner of expression was rarely so elevated, had compared him with the sun. For the loveliest golden curls hung over his big brown eyes and his round face, his gleaming white forehead arched over delicate dark eyebrows, and his cheeks glowed with health. "Sit down beside me," Aurelie said to Wilhelm. "I can see you are surprised as you observe this happy child. It's true that it gives me great joy to hold it in my arms, and I take good care of it. But I can measure my sorrows by this child, for they rarely let me appreciate the value of such a gift.

"Let me tell you about myself and my life, for I am very anxious that you should not misjudge me. I thought I would have a few peaceful moments, which is why I sent for you. Now you're here—and I've lost my thread.

"Just one more abandoned creature on this earth! you will say to yourself. You are a man and will think: Look how the fool reacts to a necessary evil, more certain to befall a woman than death itself, namely a man's infidelity! If my fate were ordinary, I would gladly bear ordinary sorrow. But my fate is so very extraordinary. Why can't I show it to you in a mirror, or have someone tell you about it! If it were just a matter of being seduced, surprised and then abandoned, there would be some consolation in despair. But my situation is far worse: I duped myself, deceived myself against my will—that is what I can never forgive myself for."

"But someone with sentiments as noble as yours cannot be completely unhappy," her friend replied.

"And do you know to what I owe these feelings?" asked Aurelie. "The worst possible education that a girl was ever ruined by, the worst example, one that misled my senses and my inclinations.

"After the untimely death of my mother I spent the best years of my growing up in the house of an aunt who made it a rule to disregard all principles of honesty. She abandoned herself blindly to every emotion, no matter whether she controlled its object or was enslaved by it, so long as she could forget herself in the whirl of enjoyment. What sort of view of the male sex could we innocent children form for ourselves from this? How obtuse, insistent, brazen and clumsy were all those whom she attracted to herself; how satiated, arrogant, empty-headed and ridiculous they became once they had satisfied their desires. I watched this woman degraded by base company for years on end. What encounters she had to put up with, what spirit she showed in accepting her fate, what shameful enslavements she had to learn to live with!

"That was my introduction to the male sex, my friend; and how utterly I despised them when quite decent men seemed, in their relations with our sex, to abandon every good feeling that nature otherwise might have made them capable of.

"Unfortunately I also on these occasions formed some negative opinions of my own sex. As a girl of sixteen I was more sensible than I am now, when I can hardly understand myself. Why are we so sensible when we are young, and why do we become ever more foolish!"

The boy was making a noise. Aurelie became impatient and rang the bell. An old woman came in to take him away. "Have you still got a toothache?" Aurelie said to the woman whose face was all bandaged up. "It's almost unbearable," said the woman in a hollow voice as she picked up the child, who seemed to go willingly, and took him away.

Aurelie began to weep bitterly when the child had gone. "I can't do anything but weep and moan," she said, "and I'm ashamed to behave like a baby before you. My concentration is gone and I can't go on talking to you." She broke off, and lapsed into silence. Her friend, since he had nothing of a general nature

that he wanted to say and nothing particular that he could say, pressed her hand and sat looking at her. Not knowing what else to do he finally picked up a book from the table in front of him. It was the works of Shakespeare, opened up to *Hamlet*.

Serlo, who had just come into the room to inquire after his sister, looked at the book in Wilhelm's hand, and said: "So there you are again, you and your *Hamlet*! Good! Many doubts have occurred to me which would seem to reduce considerably the great admiration that you choose to have for it. Haven't the English themselves admitted that the main interest ceases with the third act, and the last two just barely hold the whole thing together? Isn't it true that, toward the end, the play doesn't move along at all?"

"It is quite possible," said Wilhelm, "that some members of the nation which has produced so many masterpieces should be misled by prejudices or limitations into making such false judgments. But that shouldn't stop us from looking at it with our own eyes, and being just. I am unwilling to criticize the plan of the play; in fact, I believe no greater plan could have been conceived. Indeed it isn't conceived at all, the play just is as it is."

"How can you explain that?" asked Serlo.

"I don't intend to explain anything," Wilhelm replied, "I just want to give you my thoughts."

Aurelie raised her head from the pillow, rested it on her hands and gazed at our friend who, absolutely convinced that he was right, continued: "It pleases and flatters us to see a hero who acts of his own accord, loves and hates according to the dictates of his heart, completing what he sets out to do by removing all obstacles that impede his progress toward some lofty goal. Historians and poets like to persuade us that such pride of purpose may be the lot of mankind. But in this case we are differently informed: the hero has no plan, but the play has. A villain is not punished according to some rigid concept of revenge narrowly applied: a monstrous deed is performed, extends its evil consequences, and drags innocent people into its orbit. The evildoer seems to be avoiding the fate that is in store for him, but then plunges into it where he thought he had found a safe way out. For cruel deeds bring evil to the innocent just as good deeds bring advantages to those who do not deserve them, often without the originator being punished or rewarded. How marvelously this is presented in the play before us! Purgatory sends a spirit to demand revenge, but in vain. Circumstances combine to hasten this, but in vain! Neither humans nor subterranean powers can achieve what is reserved for Fate alone. The time of reckoning arrives; and the good perish with the bad. A whole family is mowed down, and a new one emerges."

They looked at each other for a while, and then Serlo said: "You don't much compliment providence by thus elevating the poet. You seem to be assigning to the glory of the poet what others attribute to providence, namely a purpose and plan that he never thought of."

Chapter Sixteen

"Let me now ask you a question," said Aurelie. "I have once more looked over Ophelia's part, and am satisfied that I can play it under certain conditions. But tell me this: Shouldn't the poet have given her in her madness different songs to sing? Couldn't he have chosen parts of some sad ballads? What is such suggestive and indecent nonsense doing in the mouth of this pure young girl?"

"My dear friend," said Wilhelm, "I wouldn't change them one iota. There is deep meaning in what seems to be so strange and inappropriate about these songs. We know from the very beginning of the play what her mind is full of. The dear child lives quietly for herself, but she is hardly able to conceal her desires and wishes. Lustful tones resound throughout her mind and, like an imprudent nurse, she may well have tried more than once to sing her senses to sleep with ballads that merely keep them more awake. And when she has lost all control over herself and when her heart is on her tongue, this tongue betrays her and, in the innocence of her madness, she indulges herself before the king and queen by recalling those loose songs that she so much liked: the girl who was won, the girl who crept to her lover, and so forth . . ."

He had not yet finished what he was saying, when he witnessed a curious scene which he was quite unable to account for.

Serlo had been pacing up and down, without any apparent purpose. But suddenly he went to Aurelie's dressing table, snatched up something that was lying there, and rushed toward the door with it. Aurelie had not really noticed what he was doing, but suddenly she threw herself in his path, violently grabbed hold of him, and succeeded in wresting from him the object he had picked up. They fought and struggled fiercely with each other, twisting and turning. He was laughing, she was furious, and when Wilhelm rushed up to tear them apart and quieten them down he saw Aurelie jump off to the side with a naked dagger in her hand while Serlo impetuously threw the sheath to the ground. Wilhelm drew back astonished, seeking in silent amazement for the possible cause of so strange a struggle about so unusual an object.

"You shall be the arbitrator between us," said Serlo. "What on earth is she doing with such a sharp weapon? Let her show it to you. This dagger is not suitable for any actress; it's as sharply pointed as a needle or a knife. Why this nonsense? She is such a violent person that some day or other she will do herself harm again. I have an intense hatred of such eccentricities: any serious thought of this kind is crazy, and to have such a dangerous plaything is ridiculous."

"I've got it back again," said Aurelie, lifting the shining blade. "In the future I will take better care of my trusty friend. Forgive me," she said, kissing the dagger, "for having been so careless."

Serlo now seemed to be becoming really angry. "Think what you will, brother," she went on; "how can you know whether I have not been granted a precious talisman to provide me in this form with help and advice in the worst of times? Must everything be harmful that looks dangerous?"

"Such crazy talk will drive me out of my mind!" said Serlo as he left the room in barely suppressed anger. Aurelie carefully returned the dagger to its sheath and put it into her pocket. "Let's continue the conversation which my unfortunate brother interrupted," she said, as Wilhelm started to ask her about their strange altercation.

"I have to agree that your interpretation of Ophelia is right," she said. "I wouldn't wish to misinterpret the poet's intentions, but I pity her more than I sympathize with her. Now let me tell you something which you have given me occasion to think about in the short time we have known each other. I admire your profound insights into literature, especially dramatic literature. You are able to penetrate to the very depths of what was in the poet's mind and to appreciate the subtlest nuances in its presentation. Without having ever seen things in reality you can recognize the truthfulness of their image. It seems as if some presentiment of the whole world lies within you, and this is brought to life and developed by your contact with poetry. For truly," she went on, "nothing comes into you from the outside world. I have rarely met anyone who knew so little of the people with whom he lives—indeed fundamentally misjudges them. Let me say this: when I hear you explaining Shakespeare, it seems as if you have just come from a council of the gods and heard them discussing how to make humans; but when you are associating with real people, you seem like some first child of creation growing up to gape at lions and monkeys, sheep and elephants in strange astonishment and good-natured devotion, treating them affably as your equals, simply because they live and move."

"My own maturity has often troubled me," said Wilhelm, "and I would be grateful to you, if you could help me gain a clearer understanding of the world around me. Earlier in my youth I turned my eyes inward rather than outward, and it is therefore quite natural that I have arrived at some general knowledge of the human race without in the least understanding particular human beings."

"That's true," said Aurelie. "At first I thought you were just playing a game with us when you said such positive things about the persons you sent my brother, and I compared your account of them with what they actually are."

This remark of Aurelie's, true as it might have been, and willing as Wilhelm was to admit his failings, had something about it that was oppressive, even offensive. Wilhelm said nothing. He collected his thoughts, trying to conceal his irritation and to ask himself whether her reproach was justified.

"You need not be embarrassed," said Aurelie. "One can always attain clarity of mind, but no one can give us fullness of heart. If your destiny is to be an artist, you cannot continue for much longer in a state of such imperception and ingenuousness. These are the outer coverings that protect a budding growth, and it is unfortunate if the tender plant is forced too soon. It is however a good thing if we do not always know the people for whom we work."

"I too was once in that blissful state, when I went on the stage with the highest opinion of myself and my nation. There was nothing that in my imagination the Germans didn't possess and nothing that they could not develop

into. I spoke to my nation from my slightly elevated platform, edged by lights whose brightness and smoke obscured my view of what was in front of me. How glad I was at the sound of the applause that floated up from the crowd, how grateful for this tribute of acclaim from so many different hands. I went on like this for a long time, lulling myself, through the good relationship I had with a public that responded to everything I offered them, into a sense of complete harmony with the noblest and best of my nation, for I thought that this was what I saw before me.

“But unfortunately it was not just the personality and skill of the actress that appealed to the spectators; they also made claims on the lively young girl. I was given to understand in no uncertain terms that it was my duty to share with them privately the emotions I had aroused in them from the stage. Unfortunately, that was not what I wanted. All I desired was to raise their minds; I had no concern with what they called their hearts, and, no matter what type, age or class they belonged to, they all became burdensome to me and I was irritated at not being able to shut myself up in my room like any honest girl, and spare myself all this trouble.

“The men behaved in a manner familiar to me from my aunt’s house, and they would have aroused the same loathing in me if I had not been amused by their idiosyncrasies and stupidities. Since I could hardly avoid seeing them either on the stage itself or in public places, or at home, I decided to be always on the lookout, and my brother gave me valuable assistance in this. And when you consider that slippery shop assistants, conceited merchants’ sons, smooth men-of-the-world, brave soldiers and hasty princes, all came into my ken and tried to start a romance with me (each in his own way), you will surely forgive me for believing that I had become fairly well acquainted with my own nation. I saw them all get excited—the fantastically dolled-up students, the professors uneasy in their pride of humility, the tottering and self-satisfied prelates, the stiff and attentive officials, the coarse country squires, the ingratiating courtiers, the young priests off course, the nimble or actively speculating businessmen—but, my heavens, there were very few of them who could arouse the slightest interest in me. On the contrary: it was extremely distasteful to me to cash in on the approval of these fools and endure such wearisome boredom, though in general I was pleased by any approval I received.

“But when I expected some intelligent compliment on my acting, or hoped they would praise an author whom I respected, they would make one silly remark after another and mention some insipid play they would like to see me perform in. When I listened around in company to see if a particularly fine, ingenious or witty point had made its mark and would resurface at an appropriate moment, I rarely found any trace of this. A mistake—if an actor had said the wrong word or used a provincial pronunciation—that was what they fixed on as something so important that they couldn’t get off the topic. Finally I no longer knew where I should turn; they seemed to think they were too bright to be entertained, and entertaining me by petting and pawing me. So I began

to despise them all intensely, feeling as though the whole nation was purposely prostituting itself by the representatives it sent me. They seemed for the most part so clumsy, ill educated, badly informed, so lacking in graciousness of personality and taste. I often said to myself that a German can't even buckle a shoe without having learned how to do so from foreigners!

"You can see how blind and unjust my hypochondria made me, and it grew steadily worse. I might well have killed myself, but I chose another extreme: I married, or rather I got myself married. My brother, having taken over the direction of the theater, wanted very much to have an assistant. His choice fell on a young man, who was not unattractive, one who lacked everything my brother possessed—genius, vitality, intelligence and impulsiveness—but had everything that my brother lacked—concern for order, industriousness, organizational talent and the ability to manage money.

"This man became my husband, without my really knowing how; we lived together without my knowing why. Suffice it to say that things went well. Thanks to my brother's activities he took in a lot of money; and thanks to my husband's abilities we managed well. I didn't think any more about the world or my nation. I had nothing in common with the world, and I had lost any idea of the nation. When I appeared on stage, I did so in order to live, opening my mouth simply because I was required not to remain silent, having come there in order to speak.

"So that I should do this fairly well I had resigned myself to my brother's wishes. His concern was for applause, and money; for, let me tell you, he likes to be praised and he spends a lot. I no longer acted according to my feelings and convictions, but in the way he instructed me, and when I earned his thanks, I was satisfied. He was guided by the foibles of his public; money came in, he could live according to his desires, and we had good times with him.

"But I began to lapse into a mechanical kind of routine. I spent my days without much joy or interest, my marriage was childless, and lasted only a short while. My husband fell ill, his strength visibly diminished, and my concern for him broke up my state of indifference. During this time I made an acquaintance with whom a new life began for me, a new and shorter life, for it will soon be at an end."

She stopped, and after an interval of quiet continued: "My talkativeness has suddenly dried up, and I don't dare go on. Let me rest for a while. You must not go away until you have had a full account of my misery. Call Mignon and find out what she wants."

The girl had several times come into the room while Aurelie was talking. But since they had lowered their voices every time she appeared, she had settled herself outside in the hall, quietly waiting. When she was asked to come in again, she brought a book, which, from its binding and shape, they could see was an atlas. At the pastor's house she had for the first time seen maps, had put a lot of questions about these to him, and had informed herself as best she

could. Her eagerness to learn had apparently been greatly increased by this new sort of information. She had implored Wilhelm to buy the book for her. She had deposited with the salesman her big silver buckles, and, since it was too late to do so today, she wanted to redeem them next morning. It was agreed that she should; whereupon she began to recite what she had learnt and in her own special way asked the strangest questions. Once again it became apparent that, for all her energy, her comprehension was slow and laborious. So too was her handwriting, though she took great pains over it. She still spoke a broken German; and only when she opened her mouth to sing, or played the zither, did she reveal the one organ she had to express her innermost self.

Since we are talking about Mignon, we must also mention the embarrassment that she had been causing our friend for some time. Whenever she came or went, bade him good morning or good night, she clasped him so firmly in her arms and kissed him so passionately, that the violence of her developing nature filled him with alarm. The twitching intensity of her movements increased daily, and her whole being seemed to suggest a suppressed state of unrest. She could not be anywhere without twisting string, crumpling cloth or chewing pieces of wood or paper. All these activities seemed only to deflect great inner commotion. The only thing that appeared to give her peace or serenity, was being with the boy Felix, and she played with him in the most delightful manner.

Aurelie, after a respite, determined to finish her account of what lay so heavily on her mind, became impatient at Mignon's importunity and indicated to her that she should leave. Since nothing else seemed to work, they had to send her away, very much against her will.

"It's now or never," said Aurelie, "if I am to finish telling you my story. If my tender beloved; my unjust friend, were but a few miles from here, I would say to you: get on your horse and try somehow to make his acquaintance, and when you returned, you would certainly have forgiven me and would pity me in your heart. But all I can do is tell you in words how lovable he was, and how very much I loved him.

"I came to know him just at that critical time when I was deeply concerned about my husband's life. My friend had just returned from America where he, in the company of several Frenchmen, had served with great distinction under the colors of the United States. When I met him, he behaved toward me with composure and civility, openness and generosity: he talked to me about myself, my situation, and my acting, like an old acquaintance, so full of understanding that for the first time I could enjoy seeing myself clearly in the mind of someone else. His judgments were apt without being negative, and just without being unsympathetic. There was nothing harsh about him, and when his tone became playful, it was never offensive. He seemed to be used to success with women, and that made me cautious; but he was never flattering or importunate, and so I was never worried.

"He did not cultivate many acquaintances in town. Most of his time was spent riding out to visit his many friends in the surrounding district and dealing with his business affairs. When he returned he would stop off at my house. He showed deep concern for my husband who was steadily failing and found a good doctor to alleviate his suffering. Since he had shown such interest in everything that concerned me, he allowed me in turn to share in his own experiences. He told me about his eagerness to be a soldier, about the campaign he had fought in, and about his family. He also spoke about his present occupations. In short, he had no secrets from me. He opened up his innermost self, letting me peer into the most hidden recesses of his soul, and revealing his capabilities and his passions. It was the first time in my life that I had enjoyed a relationship that appealed to my emotions as well as my mind. I was attracted by him, and enthralled before I could think about myself.

"I lost my husband almost in the same manner as I had found him; and the whole burden of the business affairs connected with the theater now fell upon me. My brother, incomparable on stage, was never much good at managing things. I had to take care of all that, and in addition studied my roles even more intently than before. I played them as I had in the past, but now with new strength and new life because of him, and for him, but not always with complete success if I knew he was in the audience. But there were times when, having seen me act, he surprised and delighted me by his unexpected approval.

"I am certainly a strange creature. No matter what part I was playing, I was really only concerned in praising him and honoring him by the lines I spoke; that was the state of my feelings, whatever the words might be. If I knew he was in the audience, I did not dare to speak out with full intensity; it was as though I did not wish to express my love and admiration for him to his face. If, however, he was not in the theater I had free range, and did my very best with a certain composure and extreme satisfaction. Applause began to please me once more, and if the public was pleased, I felt like saying to them down there: You owe that to him!

"Indeed my attitude to the public, and to the whole nation, had gone through a miraculous change. Suddenly my countrymen appeared to me once more in a very favorable light, and I was astonished at my former blindness.

"'How nonsensical it was for you to revile a nation just for being a nation,' I would say to myself time after time. 'How can individuals be so interesting? The question is whether in a mass of people there is a sufficient distribution of disposition, power and ability which, when developed by favorable circumstances, can be directed by outstanding people toward some common goal.' I was now pleased not to find much striking originality amongst my compatriots, I was glad to see that they did not scorn to take direction from elsewhere, I was glad to have found a leader.

"Lothario—let me call my friend by the name he liked best—had always presented the Germans to me in terms of their valor, and demonstrated to me

that there was no more trusty nation in the world, so long as they were properly led; and I was ashamed at not having recognized this prime quality of my nation. He knew about their history, and he was acquainted with the most meritorious men of his age. Young as he was, he had an eye for the promise that was developing in the youth of his nation, and for the quiet achievements in so many fields of active older men. He gave me an overview of what Germany is and can become, and I was ashamed at having judged it from the motley throng in theater dressing rooms. He made it my duty to be truthful, intelligent and inspiring in my own sphere of activity, and I felt inspired every time I walked on to the stage. Mediocre passages turned to gold in my mouth, and if a poet had been there to assist me in what I was doing, I would have produced the most marvelous effects.

“That is how the young widow lived for months on end. Lothario couldn’t do without me, and I was miserable when he wasn’t there. He showed me letters from his relations, especially from his splendid sister. He took an interest in every detail of our circumstances. A closer and more perfect union could not be imagined. The word love was never mentioned. He went and came, came and went—and now, my friend, it is high time that you went.”

Chapter Seventeen

Wilhelm could not put off any longer calling on his business friends. He went with some trepidation, for he knew he would find letters there from his family. He feared the reproaches they were bound to contain, for probably the firm had already been informed of the trouble he had caused. After all those chivalric adventures of his, he was not happy about appearing as a callow youth in their eyes, and so he decided to behave resolutely, and thereby conceal his uneasiness.

But to his great surprise and relief, everything went off fairly smoothly. In the bustle of these busy offices there had been little time for them to consult his letters, and only passing reference was made to his having stayed away so long. When he opened the letters from his father and from Werner, he found them all quite moderate in tone and content. His father, hoping for a detailed account such as on his departure he had urged his son to provide him with, even giving him a systematic plan of how to set it out, seemed in the beginning quite unperturbed by his silence, though he did complain about the mystifying nature of that first and only letter sent from the count’s castle. Werner merely joked in his usual fashion, gave some amusing town gossip, and asked for news of friends and acquaintances whom Wilhelm would now be meeting in the city. Extremely glad to be relieved at such little cost, Wilhelm immediately sent back some lively letters, and promised his father a detailed journal with all the geographical, statistical and mercantile observations that he had asked for. He had seen a lot on his journey and hoped to

put together an extensive report. He did not notice that he was in almost the same situation as when he had set up the lights and summoned the audience for a play that was not memorized, indeed not even written. When he therefore started to apply himself to his composition, he came to realize that he could talk about his feelings and thoughts, his experiences of heart and mind, but not about external things which, as he now noticed, had not in any way attracted his attention.

He was helped by the knowledge of his friend Laertes. These two young men, for all their differences, had become close friends, and Laertes, with all his faults, was really an interesting person in his own peculiar way. Blessed as he was with radiant vitality, he could have grown old without worrying about his condition. But now misfortunes and sickness had robbed him of the unclouded delights of youth, though at the same time they had given him some insight into the mutability and fragmentation of life. From this had come his inclination toward moody, rhapsodic utterances in which he expressed his immediate reactions. He did not like to be alone, frequented coffeehouses and inns, and when he was at home, his preferred reading, indeed his only reading, was travel books. He could now indulge in this, for he had located a big lending library and his mind was soon buzzing with information about half the globe.

It was therefore easy for him to encourage his friend when Wilhelm told him about his complete lack of facts for the solemnly promised narration. "Let's make an incomparable work of art out of it," said Laertes. "Hasn't Germany been driven through, walked through, crept through, fled through from one end to the other? Hasn't every German traveler been reimbursed by the public for his smaller or larger expenses? Just tell me the route you took before you came to us; I'll know all the rest. I'll find you sources and information for what you are composing, and we will see to it that we get the right distances and the right size of populations, even if those have not been measured or counted. We can find out the revenues of the various districts from calendars and charts, for these are well known to be the most reliable sources. On this information we can base our political speculations—not forgetting some incidental observations on government. We'll describe a few of the princes as being true fathers of the fatherland, so that we will be more easily believed when we cast some blame on others and if we don't actually pass through the towns where some famous people live, we will at least run across them in inns where they will confide arrant nonsense to us. Let's not forget to include a delightful love affair with a simple country girl, and we'll have a work to delight not only fathers and mothers, but one that every bookseller will be glad to stock."

They went to work and both of them had a great deal of fun at it. In the evenings Wilhelm went to the theater and derived the greatest satisfaction from consorting with Serlo and Aurelie. And every day he was expanding the range of his ideas which had for so long been limited to a very narrow sphere.

Chapter Eighteen

It was with the greatest interest that Wilhelm learnt about the career of Serlo, even though piecemeal; for this strange man was not given to confiding in others, nor to coherent exposition. One could well say that he was born and raised in the theater. Even before he could talk he moved the hearts of the audience by his very presence on the stage, for authors of that time were well aware of the effectiveness of natural demonstrations of innocence, and when he first said “Father” and “Mother” in plays that everyone loved, he earned vigorous applause long before he had any idea what all the clapping was about. He descended in a flying machine as Cupid more than once, emerged from an egg as harlequin, and performed at an early age the sweetest tricks as a little chimney sweep.

Unfortunately, however, he had to pay heavily in between for the applause he received on his brilliant evenings. His father, convinced that a child’s concentration was best aroused and maintained by beatings, thrashed him at regular intervals while he was learning a new part—not because he was lacking in skill, but rather that his achievement should be the more secure and lasting. In those days parents used to rain blows on children who stood around gawking when a marker was being erected, and old folks still remember the time and place where this happened. The boy grew up showing unusual mental and physical ability and great flexibility of acting powers, both in actions and gestures. While still a boy he could imitate persons so well that people believed they were seeing these very persons, despite the fact that they were quite different from the boy in figure, age and character, and different from each other. In addition he knew how to make his way in the world, and as soon as he was fairly sure of his own powers, he thought it perfectly natural to run away from his father who, as the boy’s intelligence developed and his skill increased, thought it necessary to advance these still further by even harsher treatment.

The waggish boy was blissfully happy out there in the world because his merry pranks went down well everywhere. His lucky star led him first on Shrove Tuesday to a monastery, where the reverend father in charge of processions, who had organized sacred performances for the delight of the Christian community, had just died. Here, suddenly, was a guardian angel to help them out! He took over the role of Gabriel in the Annunciation, and made a favorable impression on the pretty girl playing the Virgin Mary, who gracefully received his polite announcement with a display of humility and inner pride. He then acted in succession all the most important roles in the mystery plays, and formed quite a high opinion of himself when ultimately he was mocked, beaten and nailed to the cross as the Savior of the World.

On this last occasion some of the soldiers played their parts too realistically; and so, to take his revenge in the seemliest possible manner, he dressed them up in the sumptuous garments of kings and emperors at the Last Judgment,

and then, at the very moment when they, delighted with what they represented, were about to enter Heaven ahead of all the others, he suddenly appeared before them in the shape of a devil, beating them vigorously with a pitchfork, to the extreme edification of all the spectators and beggars in the audience, and thrusting them mercilessly back into the pit where they were most uncivilly greeted by emerging fire.

He was astute enough to foresee that these crowned heads would take offense at his bold actions and not respect his high office as prosecutor-executioner; and so, before the Millennium arrived, he crept away quietly, and went to a nearby town where he was received with open arms by a group of people known at that time as the "Children of Joy." These lively people, intelligent and perceptive, well understood that the sum of our existence divided by reason never comes out exactly and that there is always a wondrous remainder. They set out at certain fixed times to get rid of this troublesome and, if it spreads through the whole mass, dangerous remainder, by indulging, one day a week, wholeheartedly in foolishness, and on that day punishing in allegorical presentations the follies they had observed in themselves and others during the other days of the week. If this way of doing things was cruder than some kind of coherent education in which the moral part of man accustoms itself daily to observing, warning and punishing, it was certainly more amusing and more reliable. For without their denying some pet folly, they treated it simply for what it was and nothing more, instead of its becoming through self-delusion a tyrant in the household and secretly enslaving man's reason, which thought it had long ago dispelled it. The fool's mask circulated within the group, and everyone was permitted to deck it out, on his own appointed day, according to the nature of his own, or another's, attributes. At carnival time they exercised the greatest freedom, and competed with the efforts of the clergy in attracting and entertaining the people. The solemn allegorical processions of virtues and vices, arts and sciences, continents and seasons presented in visible form a number of abstract concepts, and gave the people ideas of far-off things, and so these entertainments were not without their uses, whereas the ecclesiastical mummary merely intensified absurd superstitions.

Young Serlo was once again in his element. He was not endowed with real powers of invention, but he did possess extreme skill in making good use of what was available and arranging it so that it became plausible. His ideas, his powers of imitation, that biting wit which he was able to direct, at least one day a week, even against his benefactors, made him a valuable, even indispensable, member of the company.

There was, however, a restlessness in him that drove him out of this advantageous position into other parts of his native land, where he once more had to go through a different school. He went not only to Catholic areas but also to Protestant ones that avoided displaying images, where the good and the beautiful were worshipped with equal sincerity but less inventiveness. His masks were no longer of any use; he had to concentrate on appealing directly to heart

and mind. In the short time that he spent with theatrical troupes, some small, some large, he took note of the special characteristics of all the plays and their actors. The monotony prevailing at that time on the German stage, the alexandrines with their ludicrous sound and rhythm, the dialogue that was either stilted or flat, the trivial and tedious moralizing—all this he observed; and soon noticed what really moved people and appealed to them.

He retained in his memory not just individual roles but whole plays that were playable, together with the particular tone an actor had used in performing his part and winning applause for it. On one of his journeys, when he was completely out of money, he lit on the idea of performing whole plays by himself, especially at manor houses or in villages, to cover his board and lodging. He would easily set up his “theater” in any inn, room or garden. With an impish display of seriousness and seeming enthusiasm he would capture the imagination of the spectators and deceive their senses by making before their very eyes a castle out of an old cupboard and a fan into a dagger. His youthful enthusiasm took the place of real deep feeling, his violence gave the appearance of strength, his flattery of tenderness. Those already accustomed to attending the theater were reminded of everything they had already seen and heard, and those who were not were given a foretaste of something marvelous that they wished to know more about. When something was successful in one place, he made sure to repeat it in another, and he experienced malicious glee when he could fool everybody right away, and in the same fashion as before.

His mind was so vigorous, open and uninhibited that he soon improved his performances by frequent repetition of individual parts and whole plays. He acquired the ability of reciting and acting in a manner closer to the spirit of the piece than that of the other actors he had taken as his models. He was gradually able to act in a way that appeared natural, but was, in fact, highly contrived. He seemed transported, but was carefully watching for effect, and his greatest pride was in gradually awakening the emotions of the spectators. This frantic activity soon necessitated a certain degree of moderation, and, partly by design and partly from instinct, he learnt to be economical with gestures and tone of voice, which is something that few actors seem to have any understanding of.

As a result he knew how to deal with rough, unfriendly people and win their favor. Since he was always satisfied with whatever board and lodging there was, gratefully accepted every gift, and even sometimes declined money if he thought he had already received enough, he was sent on to others with letters of recommendation, and for quite a while moved from one manor to another, giving a great deal of pleasure, enjoying himself in the process, and having various charming adventures.

He was, however, so cold-hearted that he could not really love anybody, and so clear-sighted that he did not respect anyone. All he saw were external characterizing signs and these he added to his actor's catalogue. He was, however, extremely offended in his self-assurance if he did not please every-

body and win their applause. He had so sharpened his mind and attention toward how best to win such approval that he became ingratiating not only when he was on the stage but also in ordinary life. His temperament, talent and lifestyle combined to make him develop into a superb actor. For by what seemed an unusual, but in fact was a quite natural interplay of effect and reaction, by a combination of natural insight and studied technique, he lifted his powers of recitation and declamation, as well as his use of gestures, onto such a high plane that they took on a truthfulness and unconstrained openness that contrasted with the secretiveness, artificiality and anxious dissimulation of his life.

Perhaps we will say more about his life and adventures in some other place. For the present we simply observe that in later years, when he was already an established person with a respected name and a very good though not secure situation, he played the sophist in his conversation, which took on a subtly ironic and mocking tone and thereby prevented all serious communication. He displayed this especially in talking to Wilhelm whenever the latter chose to embark on a general theoretical discourse, as was so often the case. Nevertheless they enjoyed each other's company, and their different attitudes made for lively discussion. Wilhelm always wanted to deduce everything from the ideas he had already formed and to consider art in a general context. He wanted to establish definite, precise rules of what was good, right, beautiful and deserving of acclaim—in short, he treated everything with utmost seriousness. Serlo, on the other hand, took everything lightly: He never answered a question directly, but by some joke or anecdote would provide the most charming and agreeable explanation, which instructed and enlivened the company.

Chapter Nineteen

While Wilhelm was spending many a pleasant hour in this way, Melina and the others were in a much more disagreeable situation. At times they seemed to Wilhelm like a group of evil spirits whose very presence, not to speak of their sour faces and bitter reproaches, was utterly distasteful to him. Serlo had not even given them temporary positions, let alone hopes of a fixed engagement, despite the fact that he had become steadily more acquainted with their abilities. When the actors met socially at his house he would have them read; sometimes he read himself. He chose plays that were about to be performed, plays which had not been put on for a long time, usually only parts of these. After a first such run-through, he came back to sections which he had something to say about, and had these repeated, so that the actors' understanding was enhanced and the likelihood of making the right point increased. Lesser but meticulous minds can do more to put others at ease than confused and unpolished geniuses; and so Serlo, by the clear understanding that he imperceptibly imparted to them, could turn mediocre talent into remarkable ability.

One thing that helped greatly was that he had them read poems aloud, arousing in them a sense of the pleasure that well accented verse rhythms can produce, instead of, as usually happens in such gatherings, just having them read the sort of prose that came naturally to them.

By this means he had familiarized himself with all the actors who had recently arrived, made an assessment of what they were and what they might become, and secretly resolved to use what talents they had to his advantage, in view of a revolution that was threatening among the regular members of his company. He let matters rest for the moment, shrugged off all mediation by Wilhelm, deciding to bide his time, and, to Wilhelm's great surprise, made the proposal that he himself should become a member of the company. If he agreed to that, said Serlo, then he would also engage the others.

"So these people can't be quite so useless as you said they were," Wilhelm replied. "And if they are now to be taken on, their talents will be just as good without mine, I would think."

In strict confidence Serlo revealed to him the situation that he was in. His male lead was threatening to demand a higher salary as soon as his contract was due to be renewed. But Serlo was not inclined to agree to this, especially because this man's popularity with the public was declining. On the other hand, if he were to let him go, all his closer associates would leave with him, and a number of good, but also some mediocre actors, would be lost to the troupe. Then he explained to Wilhelm what he would gain in compensation from him and Laertes and the old Blusterer, and even Madame Melina. He even promised to get great success for the Pedant by giving him Jews, ministers and various villains to play.

Wilhelm hesitated for a moment, uneasy at the proposal. But feeling that he had to say something, he took a deep breath and replied: "Your kind words concern only the good that you see and hope for in us; how about the weaknesses, which have surely not escaped your keen judgment?"

"Those we will soon turn into strengths by hard work, careful thought and much practice. Your people may be artless or bunglers in their acting, but there is not one of them who does not show some degree of promise. As far as I can observe, there are no blockheads amongst them, and those are the only people impossible to train, no matter whether it is conceit, stupidity or hypochondria that makes them so clumsy and inflexible."

Serlo briefly outlined the conditions he was prepared to offer, asking Wilhelm for a quick decision and leaving him in some uncertainty.

While working on the fictitious travelogue which he together with Laertes had undertaken to write, partly for fun and partly because it was such a marvelous idea, he had become more observant than previously of conditions and everyday life in the real world. He now understood for the first time his father's purpose in so strongly urging him to keep a journal. More vividly than ever before he realized how valuable and satisfying it was to mediate between commercial interests and human needs, and help to extend vigorous activity

in the farthest mountain and forest regions of the country. When Laertes dragged him around this busy commercial town in which he found himself, he gained a clearer sense of one big center from which everything flowed and to which everything returned. This was the first time he had experienced real pleasure in the contemplation of such activity. In this state of mind he received Serlo's proposal; and all his desires and hopes, his belief that he had inborn talent for the theater, all his sense of obligation towards his helpless actor companions became alive again.

"Well," he said to himself, "here you are having to choose again between those two women who haunted your thoughts when you were young. The one does not look so paltry now, and the other not so splendid as she did. An inner voice impels you to follow one or the other, and there are valid external reasons for choosing either. But you can't decide. What you would prefer, would be for something from outside to tip the scales in one direction. And yet, if you are honest, you must admit that the urge towards a life of business proceeds entirely from external factors, whereas your inner desires are directed toward the development and perfection of your predisposition, both bodily and mental, toward what is good and beautiful. Must you not respect the power of Fate for having, without any cooperation on your part, brought you to the goal of all you wish? Are not all your previous thoughts and intentions being realized thanks to chance, without your doing anything about it? How very strange! The desires and hopes that a man cherishes in his heart would seem to be what he knows best; and yet, when they suddenly appear before him and are, as it were, pressing in upon him, he retreats from them, not recognizing them for what they are. All my dreams prior to that fateful night which separated me from Mariane, are now standing here before me, offering themselves to me. I came here in flight and yet have been led hither by some kindly hand. My intention was to seek refuge with Serlo; now he seeks me out and offers me conditions such as I could never have hoped for as a beginner. Was it simply my love for Mariane that made me so enthralled by the theater? Or was it love of art that made me so captivated by her? Was it the thought of future prospects, with the stage as the place to realize them, that attracted a restless, disorganized youth who wanted to live apart from the humdrum circumstances of middle-class life? Or was it something much purer, and nobler? What could possibly make you change your former opinions? Haven't you really followed your chosen path without being aware of doing so? Isn't the thing now to take the final step, since there are no other considerations involved; you can keep your solemn promise and relieve yourself honorably of your heavy responsibility toward the others."

Feelings and imaginings swept in on him in lively succession. He would be able to keep Mignon, he would not have to send the Harper away — these things weighed heavily with him. He was not yet quite decided, when he went to pay one of his customary visits to Aurelie.

Chapter Twenty

He found her lying on her sofa, and she seemed calm. "Do you think you will be able to go on stage tomorrow?" he asked. "Oh yes," she said with conviction. "You should know that nothing ever stops me from doing that. If only I could find some way of dissuading the spectators from giving me their applause. They mean well, but someday they will be the death of me. Just the day before yesterday I thought my heart would break. I used to be able to be satisfied with myself. If I had studied my part and was well prepared, I was pleased by the indications ringing out from all quarters that I had succeeded. But now I don't say what I want to say or how I want to say it. I get carried away, become confused, but my acting creates an even stronger impression. The applause is louder, and I think: if only you people knew what it is that delights you! My confused, impetuous, imprecise accents move you deeply, arouse your admiration, but you don't understand that these are the anguished cries of an unhappy woman, on whom you have bestowed your favor.

"I spent this morning learning my part, going over it, and trying it out. Now I am tired and worn out, and tomorrow it will begin all over again. Tomorrow evening is the performance. I drag myself around, bored at the prospect of getting out of bed and unwilling to go back to it. All I do is move in one continuous circle. Meager consolations sometimes occur, but the next moment I reject and revile them. I won't give in, won't give in to necessity—but why should what is destroying me, be necessary? Couldn't it be otherwise? I have to pay dearly for being a German, for Germans are temperamentally inclined to treat everything seriously, and being treated seriously by everything."

"My dear friend," Wilhelm interjected, "why don't you stop sharpening the dagger that you are constantly wounding yourself with? Have you no other thoughts? Are your youth, your figure, your health, your talents of no significance to you? If you have lost something of value through no fault of your own, is that any reason to jettison everything else? Is that really necessary?"

She was silent for a while, and then burst out: "I know it's a waste of time—love is a waste of time. What could I not have done, should have done! Now everything has turned to nothing! I am a miserable creature who's in love—nothing else! Have pity on me, for Heaven's sake, I am a poor wretched creature."

She collapsed into herself, and then after a short pause, violently cried out: "You are accustomed to everything coming your way without any effort. You cannot understand. No man can possibly appreciate a woman who respects herself. By all the holy angels, by all the sacred images of bliss that a pure and generous heart may create for itself, I swear there is nothing more divine than a woman who gives herself to a man she loves! When we are worthy of the name of woman, we are cold, proud, superior, clever, clear-sighted;—but all these qualities we lay at your feet when we love, in the hope of gaining love in return. How consciously and willingly I threw away my whole existence! And

now I am ready to despair,—I intend to despair! Not one drop of blood in me shall remain unpunished, not one fiber of my being stay untormented! Go on! Smile at me, laugh at my theatrical display of passion!”

Our friend was far from anything approaching laughter. The terrifying, half-natural and half-forced state of this woman tormented him too much for that. He shared the tortures that wracked her unhappy self; his mind was distraught, his feelings in a state of feverish excitement.

She stood up and paced up and down the room. “I keep recounting all the reasons why I should not love him,” she said. “I know he isn’t worth it. I turn my mind to something else, this way or that, wherever it chooses to go. I take up some new part in a play, even though it is not one that I am going to perform. I go over the old parts that I know so thoroughly, go over them again and again, every detail of them, rehearsing and rehearsing—o my friend, my trusted friend, what a terrible effort it is to separate oneself forcibly from oneself! My mind suffers, my brain is too tense; and so in order to avoid going mad, I return to the feeling that I love him.—Yes, I do love him, I do love him,” she cried amidst constant tears, “I love him, and so—I want to die.”

Wilhelm seized her by the hand and implored her not to get so worked up. “How strange it is,” he said, “that we are denied not only what is impossible but so much that might be possible. You were not destined to find a faithful heart that would have given you every happiness. I was fated to have my whole salvation depend on an unfortunate girl whom I bent to the ground like a reed because of the strength of my devotion—I may even have broken her entirely.”

He had already told Aurelie about his relationship with Mariane and could therefore speak of it again now. She stared fixedly into his eyes, and then asked him: “Can you truthfully say that you have never deceived a woman, never tried to elicit her favors by frivolous courtesies, wanton protestations and enticing oaths?”

“I can indeed,” said Wilhelm, “and without boasting, for my life has been very simple and I have seldom been tempted to try any such thing. And what a warning it is for me, to see someone as lovely and noble as you reduced to such a pitiful condition! Let me, in your presence, swear a vow, one close to my heart, a vow whose shape and form has been decided on by the emotion that you have aroused in me and will be sanctified by this present moment: I swear to withstand all fleeting attractions and to preserve the serious ones close to my heart, for no woman to whom I will not devote my whole life shall ever hear from my lips a confession of love.”

She looked at him with a fierce expression of indifference, and when he put out his hand moved away. “It’s all of no consequence,” she said. “A few woman’s tears more or less, won’t make the ocean any bigger. And yet,” she continued, “if just one woman out of the thousands is saved, that is at least something—just one honest man discovered, that would be something to accept. Do you realize what you are promising?” “I do,” said Wilhelm with a smile, and held out his hand. “I’ll accept that,” she said, and made a motion

with her right hand so that he thought she was about to grasp his; but she plunged it into her pocket and in a flash pulled out the dagger and swept over his hand with its point. He withdrew his hand quickly but blood was already dripping from it.

"You men must be given a sharp cut if you are to take notice!" she cried in wild excitement, soon followed by an access of hasty busyness. She took her handkerchief and bound his hand to stop the bleeding. "Forgive a woman who is half crazy," she said, "but don't regret the loss of these few drops of blood. I am reconciled; I am myself again. On my knees I will beg your forgiveness; let me have the consolation of healing you."

She rushed to a closet, took out some linen and various implements, staunched the blood and looked carefully at the wound. It was in the ball of the hand just below the thumb and cut across the lifeline toward the little finger. She bandaged it quickly, pondering the matter seriously. He asked her several times: "How could you wound your friend?" "Quiet," she said, putting a finger to her lips, "be quiet!"

Book Five

Chapter One

Along with the two wounds that had not yet fully healed, Wilhelm had now acquired a third, which made him considerably uncomfortable. Aurelie would not allow him the services of a surgeon; instead, she bandaged him herself with all sorts of strange speeches, maxims and ceremonies, which made him extremely embarrassed. Not just he, but indeed everybody around her suffered from Aurelie's restlessness and peculiar behavior, and no one more than little Felix. The lively child became very impatient under such pressure, and more and more ill-behaved when she scolded or corrected him.

He began to take pleasure in certain things that are usually considered signs of ill-breeding, habits that she was in no wise prepared to condone. For example, he always preferred to drink out of the bottle rather than from a glass, and it seemed as if food from the dish tasted better than from his plate. Such impropriety was by no means ignored, and if he left the door open or slammed it shut, if when told to do something he remained rooted to the spot or rushed wildly out of the room, he was treated to a sharp lecture, yet without any noticeable effect. His attachment to Aurelie seemed to lessen from day to day, there was nothing affectionate in his tone of voice when he called her "Mother," and instead clung passionately to his old nurse, who did indeed let him do all he wanted.

But the nurse had been so sick for a while that she had been moved out of the house into quieter quarters, and Felix would have been left entirely on his own if Mignon had not become a loving companion and protective spirit to him as well as to others. Both children entertained each other in the most delightful way; she taught him little songs, and to the amazement of everyone he could recite them, for he had a good memory. She also tried to explain maps to him, for she was still much occupied with these; but she did not go about this in the best way. She was really only interested in whether various countries were cold or warm. She gave a vivid description of the poles and the terrible ice there, and how the warmth increased the further one got away from them. If someone was embarking on a journey, her only question was

whether he was going north or south, and then she tried to trace his route on her little maps. When Wilhelm was speaking about his own journeys, she was especially attentive, and became quite sad when the conversation moved to another topic. Though she could never be persuaded to take a part in a play, and never went to a performance, she would learn odes and ballads by heart, and astonished everyone when, often quite unexpectedly and as if on the spur of the moment, she recited some such poem in her own serious and solemn way.

Serlo, always on the lookout for signs of a budding talent, tried to encourage her. What appealed to him most was the delightful variety of her singing which at times was full of life and gaiety; and because of this he came also to appreciate the Harper.

Although Serlo had no particular talent for music and did not play an instrument, he well knew the great value of this art, and did all he could to experience as often as possible a pleasure that he considered superior to any other. Every week he would have a concert, and now he had a marvelous little group of musicians, with Mignon, the Harper, and Laertes, who performed reasonably well on the violin.

Serlo used to say that we are so much inclined to busy ourselves with trivialities; our minds and senses are so easily made indifferent to the effects of beauty and perfection, that we should try to strengthen our faculty of appreciating these things. No one should entirely forego such pleasures, and it is only the fact of being unaccustomed to enjoying good things that makes so many people take pleasure in what is stupid and tasteless. One should, Serlo would say, listen to a little song, read a good poem, or look at a fine painting every single day, and if possible say something sensible about it. Given such sentiments—which were part of his nature—there was bound to be plenty of opportunity for agreeable entertainment by Serlo's associates.

In the midst of this pleasant state of affairs, a letter with a black seal was one day delivered to Wilhelm. Werner's seal indicated sad news, and Wilhelm was distressed at a brief notice of his father's death. He had died quite suddenly after a short illness, and had left his domestic affairs in very good order.

This unexpected news affected Wilhelm deeply. He was overcome by a profound sense of how insensitive and neglectful we are toward our friends and acquaintances while they are still with us, and only when our happy relationship with them is terminated, at least for a time, do we regret what we have failed to do. His distress at the untimely departure of this good man was mitigated only by the feeling that his father had been little loved, and the conviction that he had gained little pleasure from life.

Wilhelm's thoughts soon turned to his own circumstances, and here he felt extremely uneasy. No occasion is more dangerous for a man than when external circumstances produce a serious change in his situation without his thoughts or feelings being prepared for this. The result is change without

change, and the tension is heightened all the more as we remain unaware of our being unprepared for the new situation.

Wilhelm suddenly found himself a free man, without as yet having achieved harmony within himself. His sentiments were noble, his intentions sincere, and his envisaged goal by no means contemptible. All this he could confidently assert; but he had often realized that he lacked experience, placed too much trust in the experience of others and attached too much value to what other people derived from their own convictions. Hence he was increasingly at a loss. He tried to acquire what he lacked by noting and assembling everything he heard or read that seemed to him worth considering. He wrote down ideas and opinions of his own and of others—sometimes even whole conversations—that interested him; but unfortunately he preserved much that was false alongside what was good, dwelt too long on one particular idea or one single maxim, and, as a result, abandoned his own natural way of thinking and acting by following the lead of others. Aurelie's bitterness and Laertes's cold contempt for humanity affected his judgment deeply. But no one was more dangerous to him than Jarno, a man whose keen intelligence delivered sharp, severe judgments on particular matters, but was wrong in giving these judgments an air of general applicability; judgments of the intellect are only relevant to a particular instance and false when extended to another.

Thus Wilhelm, in striving to achieve unity within himself, was in fact steadily depriving himself of the possibility of any such regenerative achievement; in this state of confusion his feelings were given free play, and thereby plunged him into even greater confusion about what he now had to do.

Serlo exploited the news of Wilhelm's father's death to his own advantage. Every day he had more cause to think about a different organization of the company. He must either renew the old contracts, which he did not much want to, because several members of the troupe who thought they were indispensable, were in fact becoming quite insufferable; but, on the other hand, he preferred to give the whole operation a new turn.

Without bringing pressure on Wilhelm, Serlo worked on Aurelie and Philine; and all the others who were longing for a fixed engagement did not give Wilhelm a moment's peace. So there he was, standing at the crossroads, and not knowing what to do. Curiously enough, it was a letter from Werner which, though arguing in the opposite direction, eventually brought him to a decision. We will leave out the beginning of the letter, but give the contents with little change.

Chapter Two

“ . . . That's how it was; and it is probably right that in every eventuality a man should continue with his job and keep up the good work. The dear old man had only just departed this life when everything in the office took on a tone that

was very different from his. Friends, relatives and acquaintances stormed in, but especially those who have something to gain from such occasions. There was fetching and carrying, counting, writing and reckoning; some brought cakes and wine, others just ate and drank; nobody seemed busier than the women selecting what they should wear as mourning.

“You will therefore forgive me, my friend, if I myself used the occasion to my own advantage by being as helpful and useful as I could to your sister, and, when the time was proper, I gave her to understand that it was now our business to accelerate the sealing of a union which both our fathers had delayed up to now out of an excessive sense of what was proper form.

“You must not think that what was in our minds was to take possession of that huge empty house. We are much too modest and sensible for that; so let me tell you what we intend to do. After we are married, your sister will move over into our house, and bring your mother with her.

“‘How will that be possible,’ you will say, ‘for you will scarcely have room in that little place.’ That’s the art of the thing, my friend. Skillful arrangement makes everything possible, and you wouldn’t believe how much room you can find when you don’t need much. We will sell the big house, for which we already have a good offer. The money that we realize from the sale, we will invest at one hundred percent.

“I hope you are in agreement with this, and my fond expectation is that you will not wish to inherit any of the unproductive pastimes of your father and your grandfather. Your grandfather’s major delight was in collecting a number of insignificant works of art which no one, that I can well say, enjoyed as much as he did; and your father lived in a household of expensive luxury that he never allowed anyone else to enjoy with him. We intend to do things differently, and I am hoping for your approval.

“It is true that in our whole house my only place is at my desk and I cannot yet see where we can some day put a cradle. But there is plenty of room outside the house: coffeehouses and clubs for the husband, walks and drives for the wife, and pleasant country excursions for us both. It is a very great advantage that our round table will be fully occupied, and my father will not be able to see friends who would only make frivolous remarks, when he has gone to such trouble to be a good host.

“Above all: There shall be nothing superfluous in our house! Not too much furniture, not too many utensils—no coach and no horses. Just money, which we will spend sensibly in doing what we want to. No extensive wardrobe, just what is newest and best; the husband can wear his coat till it is threadbare and the wife peddle her dress, when both have become somewhat out of fashion. There is nothing I dislike more than an accumulation of old possessions. If someone wants to give me a valuable ring on the condition that I wear it every day, I would not accept it. For what conceivable joy is there in dead capital? So here is my joyous credo: conduct your business, acquire money, enjoy

yourself with your family, and don't bother about anybody else unless you can use them to your advantage.

"Perhaps you will say: 'Where do I figure in your neat little plan? Where am I to live if you sell my father's house and there is no room in yours?'

"That, brother, is indeed the crucial point, and I will help you on that score once I have expressed appreciation of your excellent report on how you have been spending your time.

"Tell me, how did you in so short a time manage to acquire such knowledge of so many useful and interesting things? I am aware of your many abilities, but I would not have believed that you were so attentive and zealous. Your travelogue has shown us how much you have profited from your journey. Your description of the iron and copper works is exemplary and reveals your comprehension of the subject. I went there once myself, but my account looks like shoddy work when compared with yours. Your whole account of linen production is extremely instructive, and your remark concerning competitiveness is very apposite. In some places you have made mistakes in addition, but those are easily excusable.

"What gave your father and myself most pleasure were your profound insights into the management and, above all, improvement of agricultural estates. We hope to be able to purchase a big estate, now in sequestration, which is situated in a very fertile area. We shall use the money from the sale of your father's house, transferring part and leaving the rest untouched. We are reckoning on your going there to supervise the improvements. In a few years the value of the land will increase by at least a third; we can sell it and look for a bigger buy, improve that, do another trade—and you are the man for that. Meanwhile we at home will not be idle with our correspondence, and will soon all be in an enviable position.

"Farewell for now! Enjoy your life while you continue your journey, and take yourself off to wherever seems pleasant and useful. We shall not need you for the first six months, so you can now look around in the world. The best education for a smart fellow like yourself is always through travel. Goodbye, I am happy to become more closely associated with you through marriage and to be united with you by the spirit of work."

Well written and full of good business sense as it was, this letter nevertheless displeased Wilhelm in several ways. Its praise of his fictitious statistical, technological and agricultural knowledge was a silent reproach to him; and the ideal of a burgher existence that his brother-in-law depicted, did not attract him in the least. On the contrary, he felt strongly drawn in exactly the opposite direction. He convinced himself that only in the theater would he be able to achieve the education he desired for himself, and he seemed all the more strengthened in this resolve by Werner's vigorous, though unwitting, opposition. He ran through all his arguments in favor of his intentions, confirmed in his belief that he had good reason to present them in a favorable light

to a man as perceptive as Werner. He composed a reply, which we shall also communicate to our readers.

Chapter Three

“Your letter was so well written and so intelligently thought out, that there is nothing to be added. But you will forgive me if I say that one may have quite different opinions (and act accordingly), and yet also be in the right. Your way of thinking and your ideal of how to live aim at unlimited possessions and easy, light-hearted enjoyment; but I need hardly tell you that nothing of that kind holds any attraction for me.

“First, I must confess to you that my travelogue was put together from various books with the help of a friend, out of a sense of the need to give my father pleasure, and though I know about the things contained in it, and others as well, I do not understand them, and I have no desire to occupy myself with them. What help is it to me to make good iron if my soul is full of slag? What use is it to me to bring order into the management of an estate if there is disorder within myself?

“Let me put it quite succinctly: even as a youth I had the vague desire and intention to develop myself fully, myself as I am. I still have the same intention, but the means to fulfill it are now somewhat clearer. I have seen more of the world than you think, and made better use of it than you can imagine. Please devote some attention to what I am going to say, even though it may not correspond to your own notions.

“If I were a nobleman, our disagreement would soon be settled; but since I belong to the middle classes, I must stake out my own path, and I hope you will understand what I am doing. I don’t know how it is in other countries, but it seems to me that in Germany general education of the self is possible only for the nobility. The middle class can acquire merit and, if driven to extremes, develop the mind; but in so doing it loses its personality, however it presents itself. A nobleman who consorts with distinguished persons is obliged to behave in a distinguished manner, which, since all doors are open to it, becomes a manner that is free and unconstrained, so that, whether at court or in the army, his currency is his person and the figure he cuts. As a result, he has good reason to regard the way he appears as a matter of importance, and to show that he does. A certain formal grace in ordinary affairs, coupled with a certain relaxed elegance in serious and important matters, becomes him well. He is a public person, and the more cultivated his movements, the richer his voice, and the more controlled and measured his whole personality, the more accomplished he becomes; if he always remains the same, whether talking to the highborn or the lowly, to friends or relations, no fault will be found in him and no one would wish him otherwise. He can be cold, but intelligent; dissembling, but prudent. If

he is in control of himself at every moment of his life, no one has any further demands to make of him and everything else about him—ability, talent, wealth—seem only adjuncts or appendages.

“But then imagine a burgher who thinks he might make some claim to these qualities. He is bound to fail, and he will be all the more unhappy for having, as part of his nature, the ability and urge toward such a different way of life.

“Since a nobleman has no restrictions in his everyday life and may possibly be made into a king or the like, he has to appear before his fellowmen with an unspoken awareness of what he is. He can always move to the fore, whereas the burgher does best to respect quietly the limits imposed on him. The burgher should not ask: ‘Who am I?’ but ‘What do I have? What insights, what knowledge, what ability, what capital?’ The nobleman tells us everything through the person he presents, but the burgher does not, and should not. A nobleman can and must be someone who represents by his appearance, whereas the burgher simply is, and when he tries to put on an appearance, the effect is ludicrous or in bad taste. The nobleman should act and achieve, the burgher must labor and create, developing some of his capabilities in order to be useful, but without it ever being assumed that there is or ever can be a harmonious interplay of qualities in him, because in order to make himself useful in one direction, he has to disregard everything else.

“The differences are not due to any pretentiousness on the part of the aristocracy or the submissiveness of the bourgeoisie, but to the whole organization of society. Whether this will ever change, or what will change, does not really concern me. Given the present state of things, what I have to do is think about myself, maintain what I know to be the basic need of myself, and achieve its fulfillment.

“I have an irresistible desire to attain the harmonious development of my personality such as was denied me by my birth. Since I left home I have made successful efforts to improve my physical powers, and I have overcome much of my former diffidence in presenting myself as I really am. I have, for example, improved my voice and my speech and can truly say that in society I make a favorable impression. But every day my desire to be a public person becomes more and more irrepressible, with the result that I am always trying to please and be effective in wider circles. Add to that my fondness for poetry and everything connected with it, the need to develop my mind and my taste, so that, in the pleasures I cannot do without, I may gradually come to see good only in what is good, and beauty only in the truly beautiful. You can see that as far as I am concerned, all this is to be found only in the theater; only there can I really move and develop as I would wish to. On the stage a cultured human being can appear in the full splendor of his person, just as in the upper classes of society. There, mind and body keep step in all one does, and there I will be able simultaneously to *be* and to *appear* better than anywhere else. Should I seek other secondary ways of occupying myself, there will be enough routine chores to exercise my patience.

“Don’t argue with me about this; for, before you have a chance to write, I will already have taken the decisive step. Because of prevailing prejudices I will change my name; anyhow I would be embarrassed to be known by the name of Meister, which implies mastery. Fare you well. Our finances are in such good hands that I do not need to bother about them; when I need money I will ask you for it. It won’t be much, for I hope to support myself by my art.”

Having sent off the letter, Wilhelm immediately did what he said he would, and, to the astonishment of Serlo and all the others, suddenly declared that he would become an actor and was ready to sign a contract so long as its conditions were reasonable. They soon agreed, for Serlo had talked about this earlier in terms that Wilhelm and the others found quite easy to accept. The whole pathetic company, with whom we have occupied ourselves for so long, were finally taken on, without anyone except Laertes expressing any gratitude to Wilhelm. They had made their demands without confiding in him, and likewise accepted their fulfillment without thanking him. Most of them preferred to credit their engagement to the influence of Philine, and it was to her that they expressed their thanks. The contracts were drawn up and signed, and by a strange connection of ideas there arose before Wilhelm’s mind at the very moment that he was signing his fictitious name, the image of that place in the woods where he lay wounded in Philine’s lap. The lovely Amazon came riding up on her white horse from out of the bushes, moved forward, and dismounted. Her generous concern made her pace to and fro, until finally she stood still in front of him. Her coat slipped from her shoulders, her face, indeed her whole body, shone, and then she disappeared. He wrote down his assumed name quite mechanically, without knowing what he was doing, and only after he had signed the contract did he notice that Mignon was standing beside him, holding his arm and gently trying to draw his hand away.

Chapter Four

One condition that Wilhelm made on joining the company was accepted by Serlo only with a certain proviso. Wilhelm had insisted that they should perform *Hamlet* in its entirety, and Serlo agreed to this interesting but extraordinary proposal only to the extent that it was feasible. They had been arguing about this for some time, the question being what was feasible and what was not, but so far they had not been able to agree on what could be cut without destroying the play.

Wilhelm was still at that happy stage in life when it seems inconceivable that there could be any blemish on a girl one loves or an author that one admires. Our feelings are so absolute and so all of a piece that we assert a similar perfection and harmony in the objects. Serlo, on the other hand, liked to analyze, maybe too much; his sharp intelligence tended to see a work of art as a more

or less imperfect whole. He thought that there was no need to be so circumspect with plays as one found them; even Shakespeare, and especially *Hamlet*, would have to suffer somewhat.

Wilhelm was not prepared to listen to him talk in terms of wheat and chaff. "It's not a question of a mixture of wheat and chaff," he declared, "this is a tree with branches, twigs, leaves, buds, blossoms and fruit. Everything is related to everything else." Serlo replied that one shouldn't try to serve up a whole tree, but apples of gold in baskets of silver. They exhausted themselves in metaphor, and their opinions differed increasingly.

Wilhelm became nearly distraught when one day, after a long argument, Serlo suggested that the simplest way to settle things was to take a pen and strike out those things in the play that just would not get across, combine several characters into one, and, if Wilhelm did not himself have sufficient knowledge or courage to do this, he should leave it to him, Serlo, and the whole matter would soon be settled.

"That is not what we agreed on," said Wilhelm. "How can you be so reckless when you have such good taste?"

"My friend," said Serlo, "you will soon get that way yourself. I know all too well how despicable such a procedure is, and that it is perhaps something that has not happened in the best theaters. But our German theater is in such a sorry state. Our authors make such mutilations necessary, and the public accepts them. How many plays do we have that do not exceed our resources in personnel, scenery and theatrical machinery, that are too long, have too much dialogue or make demands exceeding the physical power of our actors? And yet we must go on playing, time after time, always offering something new. Shouldn't we use what we have to our advantage, since we achieve just as much by plays that are cut than by ones that aren't? It is the public that makes us do this, for there are few Germans and perhaps few spectators in any nation nowadays that have any sense of an aesthetic whole. They only praise or blame pieces, their pleasure is piecemeal, and whom does that please more than our actors, for theater remains just patchwork, a collection of bits and pieces."

"Not *remains*," said Wilhelm, "though that's what it *is*. But must everything remain as it is? Don't try to convince me that you are right. No power in the world would persuade me to abide by a contract signed in such gross error."

Serlo switched to a lighter touch and urged Wilhelm to think over their many conversations about *Hamlet* and work out by himself what would be a satisfactory version.

After spending a few days by himself, Wilhelm came back with an air of satisfaction. "I must be making a great mistake," he said, "if I don't think I've found a way of dealing with this whole matter. I even believe that Shakespeare himself would have done likewise if his mind had not been so fixed on the central idea and distracted by the novellas he was working from."

"Let me hear what you have to say," said Serlo, seating himself on the sofa somewhat pompously. "I will listen quietly and criticize sharply."

Wilhelm said: "I am not afraid of that. Just listen. After careful examination and reflection I can distinguish two aspects of the composition of the play. Very important is, first, the *internal* relationship between the personages and the events, the powerful effects that emerge from the characters and actions of the main personages—these are all excellently presented and the sequence in which they occur could not be bettered. No production of the play can destroy this, or in any way falsify it. This is what everyone demands to be shown and nobody would dare to interfere with something that makes such a deep impression on the minds of the observers. Almost all of this, I have been told, has been preserved on the German stage. But I believe a mistake has been made with regard to the second aspect of the play, namely the *external* circumstances affecting the characters, how they come to move from one place to another, how they are fortuitously brought into contact with each other; these have, in my opinion, been given insufficient importance, only referred to in passing, or even omitted. These threads are certainly rather loose and thin, but they do run through the whole play and tie up what would otherwise fall apart, and does indeed fall apart when they are left out, as if just leaving the ends were sufficient.

"To my mind these external circumstances include the troubles in Norway, the war with young Fortinbras, the ambassadorial mission to the old uncle, the settlement of the dispute, young Fortinbras's march into Poland, and his return at the end of the play. Likewise Horatio's return from Wittenberg, Hamlet's desire to go there, Laertes's visit to France and his subsequent return, the dispatching of Hamlet to England, his capture by pirates, and the death of the two courtiers because of the treacherous letter. All these things are circumstances and events which would give breadth to a romance, but they seriously disturb the unity of a play in which the hero himself has no plan, and are therefore defects."

"That's how I like to hear you talk!" said Serlo.

"Don't interrupt me," said Wilhelm. "You won't approve of everything I have to say. These faults are like temporary props for a structure and should not be removed unless they are replaced by some stronger support. My proposal would be not to tamper with the big situation at the beginning and, as far as possible, to leave it as it is both as regards its overall structure and the incidentals; and instead to replace all those desultory and distracting separate external motifs by one single motivation."

"And what would that be?" asked Serlo, rising from his comfortable position.

"I would make proper use of something that is already contained in the play," Wilhelm replied, "namely the troubles in Norway. Here is my proposal for you to consider.

"After the death of Hamlet senior, the recently conquered Norwegians become restless. The governor there sends his son Horatio, an old school friend of Hamlet's and superior in courage and shrewdness to all the others, to

Denmark, to press for the readying of the fleet, which is not proceeding space because of the easy living of the new king. Horatio knew the previous king, having fought under him in his last battles, and had always enjoyed his favor: the first scene with the Ghost will gain by this means. The new king then gives an audience to Horatio, and sends Laertes to Norway with the news that the fleet will soon be landing there, while Horatio is charged with speeding up its preparation. Hamlet's mother, however, will not agree to her son going to sea with Horatio, as Hamlet himself would have wished."

"Thank God for that!" exclaimed Serlo. "So then we can get rid of Wittenberg and the university, which were always a thorn in my flesh. I think your ideas are quite good, for, apart from the two offstage elements of Norway and the fleet, the audience does not need to supply anything in its thoughts. They can see all the rest, for that is going on before their eyes, and their imagination does not have to be chasing all over the place."

"You can easily see how I would link up all the rest. When Hamlet tells Horatio about his stepfather's crime, Horatio advises him to go with him to Norway, gain control of the army and return with it in force. When Hamlet becomes too dangerous for both the king and the queen, they have no easier means of getting rid of him than sending him to join the fleet and instructing Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to keep an eye on him; and when Laertes returns in the meantime, they send him after Hamlet, for Laertes is in a murderous temper. The fleet is delayed by unfavorable winds; Hamlet returns. His wandering through the churchyard could perhaps be better motivated. But his encounter with Laertes at the grave of Ophelia is a great moment and absolutely indispensable. The king can then decide that it would be better to rid himself of Hamlet at once. The celebration to mark his departure and his apparent reconciliation with Laertes is carried out with great ceremony, including chivalrous combats in which Hamlet and Laertes fence with each other. I cannot do without the four corpses at the end; no one should be left alive. And, since the people now have to elect a new king, Hamlet, as he dies, gives his vote to Horatio."

"Now you sit right down and work the whole thing out," said Serlo, "for your ideas have my complete approval, and let's not allow our satisfaction to dissipate."

Chapter Five

Wilhelm had been working for a long time on a translation of *Hamlet*. In doing so he had used the talented version by Wieland, which had been his first introduction to Shakespeare. Where he found something missing, he put it back, and so he had in his possession a complete text of the play when he talked with Serlo about an acting version, and had achieved relative agreement with him. He now set to work taking things out and putting things in,

separating and combining, changing things and then putting them back as they were; for, pleased as he was with his own ideas, he felt that when he put them into practice, the original suffered in the process.

When he had finished, he read it aloud to Serlo and the others. They were extremely pleased with all he had done, and Serlo in particular expressed his approval on several points.

"You were quite right," he said, amongst other things, "in feeling that the external circumstances surrounding the action should be conveyed more simply than this great writer has presented them. Everything that happens off-stage and is therefore invisible to the spectators, should be the background against which the characters move and act. The one big vista entailing the fleet and Norway will add to the effectiveness of the play; if you leave that out, it becomes just a domestic tragedy and the whole stupendous idea that a regal household is destroyed by internal crimes and ineptness would not present itself in its full majesty. If, on the other hand, this background were to be portrayed as one of shifting complexity and confusion, this would detract from the effectiveness of the characters."

Wilhelm then proceeded to defend Shakespeare once more, pointing out that he was writing for an island people, for Englishmen with sea voyages and ships as their background, who are accustomed to seeing with their own eyes the coast of France and pirates, so that what would be confusing and distracting for us, was everyday experience for them.

Serlo had to admit this, but they both agreed that a simpler and more telling background was better suited for a performance on a German stage and the imaginations of German spectators.

The roles had already been assigned. Serlo took on Polonius, Aurelie was to play Ophelia, Laertes his namesake, and a young man, recently arrived and rather squat but nevertheless lively, was given the role of Horatio. They were in some doubt about who should play the king and who the Ghost. The only person available for either of these roles was the old Blusterer. Serlo suggested the Pedant for the king, but Wilhelm protested vigorously. They could not arrive at a decision on this matter. Wilhelm had also left intact the two characters of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. "Why didn't you combine them into one?" Serlo asked. "That would be an easy saving."

"Heaven preserve me from shortcuts like that, which would work against both sense and effect!" Wilhelm replied. "What these two men are and what they do, cannot be embodied in one and the same person. It is in such details that Shakespeare reveals his greatness. The creepiness, the bowing and scraping, the approving, flattering and insinuating, their adroitness and strutting, wholeness and emptiness, their utter roguery, their ineptness—how could all this be portrayed by one person? There should be at least a dozen of them, if that were feasible. For they are not just something in society, they are society, and Shakespeare was very modest and wise to give us only two such representatives. Also I need them as a pair, so that in my version they will contrast with the one, good, honest Horatio."

"I understand what you mean," said Serlo, "and we can help ourselves out. We'll give one of them to Elmire" (that was the name of the Blusterer's oldest daughter). "It won't hurt so long as she looks good, and I will preen and train the doll so that she is a delight."

Philine was delighted that she was to be the duchess in the play within the play. "I'll make it seem so natural to marry a second husband quickly when one has loved the first so much. I shall hope to receive a huge burst of applause, and every man will wish he could be my third."

Aurelie made a sour face at these remarks; her dislike of Philine was increasing daily.

"It is really a pity that we have no ballet," said Serlo. "Otherwise you could perform a *pas de deux* with each of your husbands, and the old man could fall asleep in keeping with the rhythm and your feet and legs would look just fine on that cute little stage in the background."

"What do you know about my legs?" she said cheekily. "And as for my feet," she added, reaching quickly beneath the table for her slippers and placing them in front of Serlo. "These are my stilts and I defy you to find prettier ones."

"I was quite serious," he said; then, looking at the delicate footwear: "You're right. It would be hard to find anything prettier."

They had been made in Paris, and Philine had received them as a present from the countess, a lady whose beautiful feet were famous.

"What charming things!" said Serlo. "My heart leaps within me when I contemplate them."

"What words of rapture!" said Philine.

"Nothing transcends a pair of slippers of such delicate, beauteous workmanship," he exclaimed; "but their sound is even more charming than their appearance." He picked them up and let one after the other fall several times onto the table.

"What are you doing? Just give them back to me!" she cried.

"May I say," he added with simulated modesty and roguish seriousness, "that we bachelors, who are mostly alone at night and have fears like other men, pine for companionship in the dark and seek it in hostelryes and other strange and unsuitable places; we find it very consoling if some goodhearted girl provides us with the support of her company. It's night, we are in bed, and hear a rustling. We are startled, the door opens, and we hear a sweet little piping voice, something creeps in, the curtains swish, click! clack! the slippers fall to the ground, and whoosh! we're no longer alone. Oh that sweet, unique sound of slippers falling on the floor. The smaller they are, the finer they sound. You may talk about nightingales, murmuring brooks, rustling winds, organs and pipes, I'll stick with my click! clack! — that is the best tune to dance to, over and over again."

Philine took the slippers out of his hands and said: "Just look how I have bent them! They're much too wide for me now." Then she played with them, rubbing one sole against the other. "How warm they get!" she said, putting one of

the soles flat against her cheek, then she went on rubbing and handed it to Serlo. He was gracious enough to test the warmth, and "Click! Clack!" she said, giving him such a sharp blow with the heel that he withdrew his hand with a yelp. "I'll teach you to think otherwise about my slippers," said Philine with a laugh.

"And I will teach you not to treat old people like children!" he shouted as he jumped up, grabbed her and stole many a kiss, which she pretended to bestow under pressure. In the struggle her long hair came loose, wound itself around everybody, the chair fell to the ground, and Aurelie, disgusted by such goings-on, stood up in anger.

Chapter Six

Although several parts had been left out in this new version of *Hamlet*, there were still enough for the troupe to have difficulty in assigning them all.

"If things go on like this," said Serlo, "our prompter will have to leave his box, become one of us, and take over a part."

"I've often admired the work he does," said Wilhelm.

"Yes, I don't believe we could have a better person to prod our memory. None of the spectators will ever hear him, but on the stage we hear every word he says. He has developed a special kind of voice, and as a sort of guiding spirit whispers in our ears when we're in trouble. He knows instinctively which part of his role an actor will remember correctly, and he senses well in advance when memory will let him down. In some cases when I hardly had the time to read through the part, he spoke each word ahead for me, and I was able to get through it without mishap; but he does have certain peculiarities, which makes him of little use to others. For example, he becomes so passionately involved in the plays that he will give highly personal, emotional renderings of moving passages that should just be declaimed. This unfortunate habit has more than once put me off course."

"He has another odd habit which once let me down in a particularly tricky passage," said Aurelie.

"But how is that possible when he is so attentive?" Wilhelm asked.

"He is so moved by some passages," said Aurelie, "that he weeps bitter tears and for a time completely loses control of himself. And these are not what are normally considered moving passages, but rather, if I may say so, those beautiful passages in which an author's power of feeling becomes evident, which give most of us intense pleasure but cause others to look away."

"But if he has such a tender heart, why doesn't he become an actor?"

"Because his hoarse voice and stiff movements would not do well on the stage, and his melancholy manners make him unsociable," Serlo replied. "What trouble I have had trying to make him get along with me! But without success. He reads excellently. I have never heard anyone read better. And

he really can respect the thin dividing line between declamation and emotionally charged recitation.”

“That’s it,” said Wilhelm. “That’s what we need. What a stroke of luck! We now have the actor who can recite the passage about the rugged Pyrrhus.”

“Only someone as enthusiastic as you can bend everything to his ends,” said Serlo.

“I would certainly have been very unhappy if that particular passage had been omitted; it would have crippled the play.”

“I can’t see why,” said Aurelie.

“I hope you will agree with me when you have heard what I have to say,” Wilhelm replied. “Shakespeare introduces this group of actors with a double purpose. First: The man who declaims the speech about the death of Priam with so much emotion, deeply moves Prince Hamlet. He pricks the conscience of the vacillating youth, and so this scene becomes the prelude to the play within the play, which makes such a deep impression on the king. Hamlet is put to shame by an actor who becomes so caught up in the sorrow of a fictitious personage, and conceives the idea of ‘catching the conscience’ of his stepfather the king by this means. What a marvelous monologue that is which concludes the second act! What joy it is to recite:

O! what a rogue and peasant slave am I:
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage wann’d,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in’s aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
For Hecuba!
What’s Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her?”

“If only we can persuade our man to go on stage,” said Aurelie.

“We will have to get him used to the idea gradually,” Serlo suggested. “Let him read the speech at rehearsals, and let’s say we’re waiting for an actor to play the part. Then we’ll see whether we can work on him.”

Having agreed on this they went on to talk about the Ghost. Wilhelm could not bring himself to give the living king’s part to the Pedant and the Ghost to the Blusterer, and thought that they should wait a while; there were several other actors coming their way and perhaps the right person might be found.

One can therefore well imagine how astonished Wilhelm was that same evening to find a letter addressed to him under his stage name, written in strange characters, sealed, and lying on his table, which said: “We know full well, o wondrous youth, that you are in a serious predicament. You can hardly find enough living persons for your *Hamlet*, let alone ghosts. Your zeal deserves to be rewarded by a miracle: We cannot perform miracles, but

something miraculous shall happen. If you have confidence in us, the Ghost will appear at the appointed hour. Take courage, and be not afraid. A reply is not necessary, we will be informed of your decision."

He hurried back to Serlo with this curious message. Serlo read it several times, reflected, and then said that he thought this was a matter of importance, and they ought to consider whether they should take the risk. They talked back and forth. Aurelie was very quiet and smiled from time to time; and when some days later they returned to the subject, she made it quite clear that she thought this was one of Serlo's jokes. She urged Wilhelm not to worry and to wait patiently for the Ghost to appear.

Serlo was in the best of humor, for the actors who were leaving did all they could to perform well, so that they would be sorely missed, and he expected good takings from the public that would be anxious to see the new actors.

His association with Wilhelm also affected him. He began to talk more about art, for he was after all a German, and Germans like to be able to justify what they are doing. Wilhelm made a record of many of these conversations, and we will impart these to those of our readers who may be interested in dramaturgical questions, but sometime later, so as not constantly to interrupt the flow of the narrative.

Serlo was in an especially good mood one evening when talking about the role of Polonius and how he conceived it. "I promise you," he said, "this time to come up with a really worthy figure. I will convey his calm assurance, his insaneness and his thoughtfulness, agreeableness as well as tactlessness, free-spirited and yet eavesdropping, a rogue at heart who pretends to be truthful, each of these facets in its place. I will present a graybeard who is honest, long-suffering and timeserving, someone who is half a villain but also the perfect courtier; and for this I will make use of the few indications the author has given us. I will talk like a book when I am prepared, and like a fool when I am in a good mood. I will be insipid enough to parrot what others say, and yet refined enough not to show that I know when they are making a fool of me. I have rarely played a part with such anticipation and malicious enjoyment."

"If only I had as much to anticipate from my role," said Aurelie. "I have neither the youthfulness nor the gentleness to think myself into this character. But one thing I unfortunately do know: The feelings that turned Ophelia's head will always be with me."

"Let's not bother too much about all this," said Wilhelm. "For I can say that, despite my intense study of the play, my desire to act Hamlet has led me astray. The more I worked myself into the part, the more I have become aware that my physical appearance has absolutely none of the characteristics Shakespeare gave to Hamlet. And when I realize that everything in the role fits together into one piece, I have doubts whether I can do even a moderately good performance."

"You are reacting very conscientiously to your new profession," Serlo replied. "An actor fits himself as best he can to the role, and the role will

necessarily have to adapt itself to him. But tell me, how did Shakespeare conceive Hamlet's physical appearance? Is it so different from yours?"

"First of all, he is blond," said Wilhelm.

"That seems to me far-fetched," said Aurelie. "Where did you get that idea?"

"As a Dane, a Norseman, he is bound to be blond, and have blue eyes."

"Do you think Shakespeare thought about such things as that?"

"I don't find it expressly stated, but I think it is undeniable if one considers certain passages in the play. The fencing is hard for him, sweat runs off his face, and the queen says: 'He's fat and scant of breath.' How can you imagine him, except as blond and portly? For people who are dark-haired are rarely like that when they are young. And do not his fits of melancholy, the tenderness of his grief, his acts of indecisiveness, better suit someone like that than a slim youth with curly brown hair from whom one would expect more alacrity and determination?"

"You are spoiling my whole image of him," said Aurelie. "Get rid of that fat Hamlet! Don't show us a portly prince. Give us instead some substitute to please us and engage our sympathies. We are not as much concerned with the author's intentions as we are with our own pleasure, and we therefore expect to be attracted by someone like ourselves."

Chapter Seven

One evening the company debated whether drama or novel should be ranked higher. Serlo asserted that this was a futile and ill-conceived argument, since each could be excellent in its own way, so long as it kept within the bounds of its genre.

"I am not quite clear about that," said Wilhelm.

"Who is?" said Serlo. "And yet it would be worth while going into the matter more closely."

They all talked back and forth, and the final result of their conversation was roughly this:

In the novel as well as in the drama we observe human nature and action. The difference between the two genres lies not merely in their external form—people talk in the one and are usually talked about in the other. Unfortunately many dramas are only novels in dialogue, and it should be perfectly possible to write drama in letters.

In the novel it is predominantly sentiments and events that are to be presented; in drama, characters and deeds. The novel must move slowly and the sentiments of the main personage must, in some way or another, hold up the progression of the whole toward its resolution. But drama must move quickly and the character of the main personage must press toward the end, not himself holding up this progression, but being held up in it. The hero of a novel must be passive, or at least not active to a high degree; from the hero of a play

we demand effective action and deeds. Grandison, Clarissa, Pamela, the Vicar of Wakefield, even Tom Jones are, if not passive, yet "retarding" personages, and all events are to a certain extent fashioned after their sentiments. In drama, the hero fashions nothing according to himself, everything resists him, and he either clears obstacles or pushes them aside, or he succumbs to them.

They agreed that in the novel Chance might well be given free play, but that it must always be guided and controlled by the sentiments of the personages; whereas Fate, which, without any action by human beings on their part, drives them through circumstances unrelated to themselves toward an unforeseen catastrophe, can have its function only in drama. Chance may indeed produce pathetic, but never tragic situations; whereas Fate must always be terrible and becomes tragic in the highest sense if it brings guilty and innocent deeds that are not connected with each other into some dire connection.

These reflections led them back again to the peculiarities of *Hamlet* as a play. The hero, it was said, really only has sentiments, and it is only external events that work upon him, so that this play has something of the breadth of a novel. But since Fate determines its plan, since it begins with a terrible deed and the hero is driven ever further toward another terrible deed, it is tragic in the highest sense of the term and cannot but end tragically.

The next thing to do was to have a reading rehearsal. Wilhelm envisaged this as a sort of celebration. He had collated the parts in advance, so that there should be no objections raised about them. All the actors were fully acquainted with the play, and all he did before they began was to impress on them how important a reading rehearsal is. It is demanded of every musician that he should be able to play more or less at sight, and therefore every actor, indeed any well-bred person, should practice sightreading, extract the character of a drama, poem or story, and be able to reproduce this with some facility. Memorizing is of no use at all unless an actor has first thought his way into the spirit and intentions of the author; the letter is nothing without the spirit.

Serlo asserted that he would supervise all rehearsals, including the dress rehearsal, once they had agreed on the importance of having the reading rehearsal. "For," he said, "there is nothing more amusing than actors talking about studying. It is like freemasons talking about work."

The rehearsal went well, and the time was well spent, for it created a solid basis for the profit and repute they were to earn.

"You did well, my friend, to talk so seriously to our colleagues," said Serlo once they were alone together, "but I am afraid they will hardly come up to your expectations."

"Why not?" Wilhelm enquired.

"My experience has been that it is easy enough to set people's imaginations working, but, much as they like to be told tales, their minds are rarely productive. This is especially so with actors. An actor is quite content to take on a striking and worthy role, but rarely does more than put himself self-satisfiedly

in the hero's place, without any concern as to whether other people will accept that. But having a vivid comprehension of what the author of the play had in mind, and knowing how much of one's own personality one must efface in order to do justice to the role, sensing that one is oneself quite different, and yet having the power to convince the audience that one is what one portrays, having the ability by the compelling truth of the presentation to turn planks into temples and cardboard into forests—that is given to few. The mind's power to create illusion in the spectators, fictitious truth producing solid effects by aiming solely at illusion, who amongst them can understand that?

“Let us therefore not insist too much on spirit and feeling. The safest way to proceed will be to explain quietly to our friends the meaning of the text and open up their minds. Those who have the right talent will quickly find their way into the sort of portrayal that is both intelligent and moving; and those who do not, will at least not act and speak all that badly. There is, according to my observation, nothing more presumptuous in actors (and indeed in everybody else) than claiming to understand the spirit without having a clear understanding of the letter.”

Chapter Eight

Wilhelm arrived early for the first full rehearsal, and found himself alone on stage. He was surprised by what he saw and was beset with strange memories. There were sets for a forest and a village that were just like those in the theater of his home town on the day that Mariane had declared her love for him at a rehearsal and agreed to spend that first blissful night with him. The cottages on the stage were all alike, just as they are in the country; the morning sun shone actually through a half-open window on to a rather rickety stage bench near the door, but unfortunately not, as previously, on Mariane's bosom. He sat down, thought about this strange concatenation of circumstances, and even felt that he might see her again soon. But what he was looking at was only the set for an epilogue such as was at that time customarily given on German stages.

His thoughts were interrupted by the arrival of the other actors, together with two men who seemed interested in the theater and its equipment. These two greeted Wilhelm warmly. One of them was a sort of hanger-on of Madame Melina's, the other was a real devotee of the drama; any good company would be happy to have both as friends. It was hard to say whether they had more love of the theater or knowledge of it. They loved it too much to understand it properly, and they understood enough to approve of what was good and disapprove of what was not. They were not unmoved by what was mediocre, but their pleasure, both in anticipation and in retrospect, at what was really good, seemed to surpass their powers of expression. They delighted in the

mechanics, were transported by what appealed to their mind, and their passion for the theater was so strong that even a piecemeal rehearsal would create some degree of illusion in them. The faults always receded into the distance, and the good things touched them deeply. They were the kind of admirers every artist wants. They liked to stroll from the wings down to the auditorium, and back again, they loved to linger in the dressing rooms. Their favorite occupation was to offer comments on the posture, costume, reciting and declamation of the actors, their liveliest conversation concerned the effects produced, and their efforts were constantly directed towards making sure that the actors were attractive, active and to the point, giving them their assistance and affection, and, though shunning extravagance, providing them with various little pleasures. They had secured the exclusive right of being present at every rehearsal and performance. They did not agree with Wilhelm on every point regarding the performance of *Hamlet*. Occasionally he yielded to their opinions, though on the whole he tended to stick to his own. All these conversations contributed to the development of his own taste. He let both men see how much he respected them, and they for their part were of the opinion that this united effort was the harbinger of a new era in the German theater.

The presence of these two men at the rehearsals was extremely useful. Above all they were able to persuade the actors that in a rehearsal positioning and movements should be coordinated with speaking just as in a finished performance, so that the combination would become completely automatic. Especially as regards the hands: there should be no ordinary, trivial actions during the rehearsal of a tragedy such as taking a pinch of snuff. If an actor does that, there is the risk that in the performance he might miss his snuffbox. They were also against actors rehearsing in high boots when the role called for shoes. And nothing distressed them more at rehearsals than actresses who put their hands in the pleats of their skirts.

Another good thing that emerged from the advice of these two men was that the actors learned how to drill and march. "Since nowadays there are so many military roles," they said, "there is nothing more pathetic than seeing men totally without training waddling about the stage in captain's and major's uniforms." Wilhelm and Laertes were the first to take instruction from a drill sergeant while at the same time vigorously continuing their fencing practice.

So these two friends of the theater spent a great deal of effort improving a company that had been brought together by such happy chance. They insured the future satisfaction of the public by talking to the actors about this their most passionate concern. It was difficult to overestimate the value of their efforts, because they concentrated particularly on what was of most importance, namely that it was the duty of the actors to speak loud and clear. On this they encountered more opposition than they had at first expected. Most of the actors wanted to be heard much as they usually spoke, not to speak so that they could be heard. Some blamed the building, others said one shouldn't shout if one was to speak naturally, intimately or tenderly.

Our two friends, patient beyond words, tried to clear up this misapprehension and to overcome such stubborn notions. They tried every argument and every form of flattery, and finally succeeded in their purpose by pointing to Wilhelm as a good example. He asked them to sit during rehearsals at the far end of the building, and to let him know when they could not hear what he was saying by knocking on the bench with a key. He articulated well, spoke in measured tones, raising his voice by stages, but never shouting even in the most violent passages. At each subsequent rehearsal there was less knocking of keys; gradually all the other actors accepted the procedure, and everyone now hoped that the play would be audible in all parts of the house.

One can see how human beings like to reach their ends only by their own means, how much trouble it takes to make them understand what is self-evident, and how difficult it is to implant in someone who has real ambitions the first conditions that will make his efforts likely to succeed.

Chapter Nine

Work proceeded on sets and costumes, and various other things. Wilhelm had some fancies about certain scenes and passages, and Serlo gave in to these, partly because of the contract and partly from being convinced by what he said, but also because he hoped, by obliging him in this respect, to win him over, and then, in the future, to influence him more and more toward his own ends and purposes.

For instance: Wilhelm wanted the king and the queen to be seated on their thrones in the first big scene with the courtiers off to the side and Hamlet placed unobtrusively amongst them. "Hamlet," he said, "must keep quiet, his black garments will sufficiently mark him out. He should conceal himself rather than be readily visible. Only when the audience is over and the king speaks to him as a son, should he step forward and the scene take its appointed course."

A major problem was presented by the two portraits, which Hamlet refers to so passionately in the scene with his mother. "I want them both to be life-size and placed on the back wall on either side of the main entrance, with that of the old king in full armor like the Ghost and on the side where it enters. He should be portrayed with his right hand raised in a gesture of command, slightly turned to one side and almost looking over his shoulder, so that he looks exactly like the Ghost when it goes out of the door. That will be very effective when Hamlet is looking at the Ghost and the queen at the portrait. The stepfather should be presented in full regalia but not make such an imposing impression as Hamlet's father."

There were various other points which we will perhaps have occasion to refer to later.

"Are you adamant about Hamlet dying at the end?" Serlo asked.

"How can I keep him alive," said Wilhelm, "when the whole play has crushed him to death? We've already talked about that at length."

"But the public will want him to remain alive."

"I will gladly grant you anything else, but that cannot be. We also wish that a fine man suffering from a mortal illness should live longer. His family weeps and beseeches the doctor, but he cannot save him; natural necessity cannot be withstood, but no more can a recognized artistic necessity. It would be making a false concession to the mob to arouse feelings that they desire rather than what they should have."

"The one who provides the money should have his choice of the goods."

"Yes, to a certain extent; but a large public deserves to be respected, and not treated like children from whom you take money. If, by showing them what is good, we develop in them a feeling or taste for what is good, they will be all the more willing to pay their money because they will have nothing to reproach themselves for. They can be flattered like a child you wish to improve and help toward greater intelligence, not like a rich grandee to perpetuate his failings from which one profits."

They also settled various matters related to the question of what should be changed and what could be left as it is. We will not go into that any further now, but perhaps we will sometime communicate this new version of *Hamlet* to those of our readers who may be interested.

Chapter Ten

The dress rehearsal was over. It had lasted an unconscionably long time. Serlo and Wilhelm found that there was still much to be concerned about; for, despite the length of time they had spent on preparation, there were certain matters that had been put off till the last moment. For example: The portraits of the two kings were not finished, and the scene between Hamlet and his mother, which they expected would have a terrific effect, was as a result still very thin because neither the Ghost nor its portrait were part of it. Serlo joked about this and said: "We would really be in a sorry situation if the Ghost were not to appear, the watch were to fence with thin air, and the prompter were to supply the Ghost's speech!"

"Let's not scare away our supernatural friend by our doubts," Wilhelm replied. "He will turn up at the right time, that's for sure, and surprise us as much as the spectators." "Yes," said Serlo. "But I'll be glad when tomorrow's over and the play has been performed. It has caused us much more trouble than I thought it would."

"No one will be more pleased than I," said Philine, "when the performance is over, even though I am not worried about my part. But having to listen over and over again to people talking about one and the same thing, whereas all they

are really concerned about is a performance which, like hundreds of others, will soon be forgotten—that really tries my patience. For Heaven's sake, don't make so much fuss! When guests have finished a meal they always have some criticism of what they have been eating, and if one listens to them when they are back home, they talk as if they wonder how they managed to stick it out."

"Let's make good use of that comparison, my dear," said Wilhelm. "Just think how much must be contributed by nature and art, by marketing, salesmen and experts to produce a banquet, how long the stag must spend in the forest, the fish in the river or the sea, before it is ready to grace our table, all that to be achieved by the housewife and cook in the kitchen! Just think with what little thought we gulp down the efforts of some distant winegrower, shipper or merchant with our dessert, as if these were to be taken for granted. Do you really think that, on that account, all these people should not exert themselves in production and preparation, and our host should not assemble everything with the utmost care, just because the pleasure provided is not a lasting one? No pleasure is temporary, for it leaves a lasting effect; and our own work and effort conveys some sense of a hidden energy to the audience, and one never knows what effect that may have."

"I don't care about all that. But what I have noticed," said Philine, "is that men always contradict themselves. Despite all your conscientious efforts not to truncate this great author, you have left out the best remark in the play." "The best?" said Wilhelm. "Yes, the best, and one that Hamlet uses to his advantage." "And what might that be?" asked Serlo. "If you had a periwig on, I would snatch it off you," Philine replied; "something needs to be done to clear your head."

The two men thought hard, and conversation stopped. It was already late, so they got up to leave, but while they still stood there pondering, Philine sang a little song with a tune that was very engaging:

Do not sing in tones depressing
Of the loneliness of night;
No, O fair one, it's a blessing
Made for purposes of delight.

Just as man is given a wife to
Be his better half—agreed—
So is night the half of life too,
And the nicer half indeed.

How can day bring glad elation
Since it interrupts our joy?
It's just good for dissipation,
Worthless else for man or boy.

But when night comes to eclipse the
Gentle lamplight's dusky glow,
And from lips to nearby lips the
Mirth and love well up and flow—

When a wanton lad who's eager,
Full of fire, the hasty sort,
Often for a gift that's meager
Tarries for a bit of sport—

When the nightingale is singing
Songs of love to lovers' ears,
It's the sadder echoes ringing
That a wretched captive hears—

With a heart that beats the time then
You await the bell's reprise
Which with twelve slow bongs will chime then,
Pledging safety, rest and ease!

So, as through long days you hurry,
Mark this maxim to employ:
Every day is dark with worry,
And the night is bright with joy.

When she had finished she made a little bow, and Serlo shouted a loud bravo. She ran out of the room and rushed away laughing. They heard her clattering down the stairs with her heels, still singing.

Serlo went into the adjoining room, but Aurelie remained with Wilhelm who was waiting to bid her goodnight.

"How repulsive she is, repulsive to every one of my feelings," said Aurelie. "Even down to the smallest details. I can't bear those brown eyebrows with her blond hair, which my brother finds so attractive, and that scab on her forehead has something so loathsome, so vulgar about it that I always want to step back ten paces. She told me the other day—she thought it was funny—that, when she was a child, her father had thrown a plate at her head from which she still had this mark. She is certainly marked on her eyes and forehead, so much so that one should avoid her."

Wilhelm did not respond, and so Aurelie went on to express even more of her distaste: "It is almost impossible for me to say anything kind or polite to her, for I hate her so much, even though she is so endearing. I wish I were rid of her. You too, my friend, have a certain affection for this creature, a way of acting toward her that wounds my very heart, an attention that borders on respect which, by God, she does not deserve!"

"I am grateful to her for what she is," said Wilhelm. "Her manners leave much to be desired, but I must do justice to her character."

"Character!" Aurelie exclaimed. "Do you think such a creature has character? Oh, you men, that's just like you. And this is the sort of women you deserve!"

"If you harbor any suspicions on this score regarding me, I assure you that I can account for every minute I have spent with her."

"Well, well," said Aurelie. "It's getting late, so let's not quarrel. One and all, all and one! Good night, my friend; good night, my fine bird of paradise!"

Wilhelm asked her how he came to earn this honorific title.

"Some other time," said Aurelie. "Some other time. It is said they have no feet, only soar in the air, and nourish themselves from the ether. But that's only a fairy tale, just a poetic fiction. Good night, and pleasant dreams — if you are lucky."

She went to her room and he was left alone. Then he hurried off to his own room.

He paced up and down restlessly. The jocular but deliberate tone of Aurelie's words had offended him: He felt she was being profoundly unjust toward him. He could not act ungraciously or hostilely toward Philine. She had done him no wrong. And he felt so far from being in any way attracted to her, that he could proudly and steadfastly maintain that he had stood the test.

He was just about to undress and go to bed when, pulling back the curtains, he noticed to his great surprise a pair of women's slippers at the foot of the bed, one upright, the other turned over. He soon recognized them as Philine's. He also thought he observed that the bed curtains were displaced; it seemed they were moving. He stood and gazed with unaccustomed eyes, catching his breath in some emotion and irritation, then said sharply:

"Get up, Philine! What's the meaning of this?" he shouted. "Where's your common sense! What sort of behavior is this! Are we to be the talk of the household tomorrow?"

But nothing stirred.

"I'm not joking," he said. "This foolishness is not to my taste."

Still no sound, still no movement!

Finally, determined and angry, he stepped up to the bed and tore the curtains aside. "Now get up," he said, "or I'll leave you here on your own."

But to his great astonishment he found his bed empty, the pillows and covers blissfully undisturbed. He looked around, but could not find a trace of the little minx. Nothing behind the bed, nothing behind the stove, nothing behind the closets. He searched and searched. Indeed a malicious observer might have thought that he was hoping to find something.

He could not sleep. He put the slippers on his table, walked around, stopping several times by the table, and if some imp of a spirit had been watching him, he would surely have reported that Wilhelm occupied himself for a good part of the night with the pretty little stilts, looking at them and fondling them, and it was nearly daybreak before he fell fully clothed into his bed and slept amidst a host of the strangest fantasies.

And he was still sleeping when Serlo came in, shouting: "Where on earth are you? Still in bed? How could you! I've been looking everywhere in the theater for you. There is still a lot to do."

Chapter Eleven

The morning and afternoon passed quickly, and the house was already full when Wilhelm hurried to dress. This time he did not don his costume with the same leisureliness as he had the first time; he was now anxious to be ready on time. When he joined the ladies in the greenroom, they all agreed that nothing was right: the plumes on his hat were off to one side, the clasp didn't fit, and they all began to take them apart, sew them together again, and put everything in order. The overture started with Philine's objecting to something about his ruff and Aurelie's about his cloak. "Let me be, dear girls," he said, "this untidiness will make me a real Hamlet." But the women would not let him be, and went on improving his appearance. The overture came to an end, and the play started. Wilhelm looked at himself in a mirror, pulled his hat further down over his face, and touched up his makeup.

At that moment someone came rushing in, crying: "The Ghost! The Ghost!"

Wilhelm had not had the time to remember his prime concern, whether the Ghost would arrive or not. Now all his fears were removed, and a most remarkable guest appearance was to be anticipated. The stage manager came to ask about various things, so that for the moment Wilhelm did not have time to look around for the Ghost. He had to hurry to take his place by the throne, where the king and queen, surrounded by all the courtiers, were established in all their glory. All he had time to hear were the last words of Horatio, who described the appearance of the Ghost, but with some confusion, as if he had forgotten his lines.

The drop curtain was raised, and Wilhelm saw that the theater was full. When Horatio had concluded his speech and been given his orders by the king (in accordance with the addition that Wilhelm had made to the play), he came up to Hamlet and, as if he were presenting arms before his prince, said: "There's a very devil behind that armor! He scared us all to death!"

In the meantime two men could be seen standing in the wings, tall, and dressed in white capes with hoods. Wilhelm had been so distracted, uneasy and nervous that he felt he had bungled the first monologue, though the audience applauded wildly when he left the stage, and now he was about to enter the gruesome winter night of the drama in a state of trepidation. He pulled himself together and delivered the timely speech about the drunken swinishness of the Danes with such fitting distaste that, like the spectators, he forgot about the Ghost, and was therefore quite terrified when Horatio said: "Look, my lord, it comes!" He turned around sharply, and the tall noble figure with its soft silent tread in the seeming heavy armor made such a strong effect on him that he stood there petrified and could only murmur the words: "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" He stared at the figure, took a few deep breaths, and delivered his address to the Ghost in such a distraught, broken and compulsive manner that the greatest of artists could not have done better.

His translation of this passage was a great help to him, for he had kept very close to the original, conveying the surprise and fright, the horror that was seizing hold of Hamlet's mind as he said:

Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damn'd,
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable.
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father; royal Dane, O! answer me.

One could feel a strong reaction in the public. The Ghost beckoned, and to the sound of tumultuous applause the prince followed.

The scene changed, and when they reached the distant place the Ghost suddenly stopped and turned, so that Hamlet found himself too close to him. Wilhelm peered eagerly into the shut visor but all he could see were deepset eyes and a well-shaped nose. He stood before him, timid and observing; but when the first sounds emerged from beneath the helmet, uttered in a pleasing but somewhat rough voice, out came the words: "I am thy father's spirit," Wilhelm stepped back shuddering, and the whole audience shuddered. The voice seemed familiar to everyone, and Wilhelm thought it sounded like that of his own father. These mysterious feelings and memories, his eagerness to discover the stranger's identity without offending him, coupled with his own clumsiness in getting too close to him on the stage—all this tore Wilhelm in different directions. He changed position so often during the long narration of the Ghost, he seemed so uncertain of himself and ill at ease, so attentive but at the same time so distracted that his performance aroused the admiration of all and the Ghost heightened their terror. The Ghost spoke in a tone of vexation rather than of sorrow, but it was an anger of the mind, slow and inestimable. It was the malaise of a great soul that is deprived of all finiteness and consigned to infinite suffering. At last there came the moment when the Ghost descended, but he departed in a strange way, for a thin grey veil surrounded him and dragged him down, like a mist rising from the depths.

Then Hamlet's companions returned and swore upon his sword. The old mole worked in the earth so fast that, wherever they moved to, he was always beneath them, crying: "Swear!" They were constantly changing position as if the ground were burning their feet. The effect was heightened by little flames appearing wherever they stood. All this left a deep impression on the public.

The play continued without any mishap. Everything turned out as it should, the public showed its approval, and the actors' spirits rose from scene to scene.

Chapter Twelve

The curtain fell, and loud applause resounded from every corner of the house. The four noble corpses jumped up and embraced each other joyfully. Polonius and Ophelia came out of their graves and heard with keenest pleasure the vigorous applause that greeted Horatio when he stepped forward to tell the audience about the future program. But they would not let him announce any other play; they demanded that this one should be repeated.

"Well, we won the day!" said Serlo, "but let's not have any more intelligent talk tonight! First impressions are the most important. No actor should be blamed for being rather cautious or headstrong on a first night."

The cashier came up with a heavy till. "We've begun very well," he said, "and first opinions will work to our advantage. But where is the supper you promised? We have every right to feast tonight." They had agreed to remain in their costumes and have their own private celebration. Wilhelm had undertaken to find the place, and Madame Melina the food.

A room that was normally used for painting sets had been cleaned up and decked out with small bits of scenery to suggest a garden and a colonnade. As they entered they were dazzled by the bright light of lots of candles shining ceremoniously through plentiful clouds of sweet smelling incense on a richly laid table. There were shouts of joy at the décor and everyone took his seat. It seemed as if a band of regal spirits had assembled. Wilhelm sat between Aurelie and Madame Melina, Serlo between Philine and Elmire; everybody was delighted with the seating, and with themselves.

The two connoisseurs were also present and added to the delight of the company. They had, several times during the performance, stepped on stage and could not say often enough how satisfied they and the public had been. They went into details, praising each individual performance, the merits of this or that actor, the excellence of this or that section. The prompter, who was sitting quietly at the far end of the table, received great praise for his rugged Pyrrhus. The duel between Hamlet and Laertes could not have been better, Ophelia's lament had been inexpressibly sweet and noble, Polonius's acting so good that there was nothing to be said about it. Everyone who was present felt himself praised in and by the others.

Even the absent Ghost received his praise and admiration. He had spoken the part with the appropriate voice and in impressive fashion, they were truly amazed that he seemed to be well informed about what had been happening in the company. He had looked exactly like the portrait, as if he had sat for it himself; and the two men could not adequately express their admiration for the awesome effect produced when he first appeared close to his portrait and then walked right past it. So striking was the combination of truth and illusion that they had been quite convinced that the Queen had not seen the apparition. Madame Melina was praised for staring up at the portrait while Hamlet pointed down at the Ghost.

Everyone wondered how the Ghost could have got into the theater, and learned from the stage manager that the back door, which was usually blocked by sets, had been left free that evening because for the play they needed the feeling of a Gothic hall; and through this door two tall figures in white capes and hoods had come, each indistinguishable from the other, and both had left after the third act, probably through the same door.

What Serlo particularly liked about the Ghost was that he did not dither and moan like a workman about his sorry state, and then exhort his son in words suited to a great hero. Wilhelm remembered that particular speech and agreed to put it back into the stage copy.

They were all enjoying the party so much that they had not noticed that the Harper and the children were not present. But soon they turned up, bizarrely decked out, Felix with a triangle, Mignon with a tambourine, and the Harper with his heavy instrument hanging from his shoulders, holding it in front of him as he played it. They trooped round the table singing all sorts of songs. They were given something to eat, and received what the others thought was a service, by being given as much of the sweet wine as they could drink, for everybody had not stinted themselves in wine, whole baskets of which, and excellent wine at that, had been contributed by the two connoisseurs. The children jumped and danced, and Mignon was particularly uninhibited, more than she had ever been before. She played the tambourine as delicately and then as loudly as possible, sometimes lightly skimming her fingers over the skin, at other times beating on it with the back of her hand or her knuckles, even alternating between striking her knees or her head with the instrument, sometimes just making the bells ring, so that all sorts of sounds were enticed from this simplest of instruments. After the children had made quite a din, they fell into an unoccupied armchair across from where Wilhelm was seated.

"Keep away from that chair!" Serlo shouted. "It's probably reserved for the Ghost, and if he comes, you'll be in a bad way."

"I'm not afraid of him," said Mignon. "If he comes, we'll get up. He's my uncle; he won't hurt me." Nobody understood what she meant, except those who knew that she had called the man she thought was her father "the big devil." They all looked at each other, suspecting more strongly than ever that Serlo knew something about the apparition. They went on talking and drinking, and every now and again the girls would look anxiously in the direction of the door.

Sitting in the armchair like puppets hanging out of a box, the children started a little game of their own, with Mignon making a rasping noise as puppets do. They banged their heads together as if these were made of wood. Mignon was almost frenetically excited and, amusing as this had been in the beginning, it became such that it had to be curbed. But admonishing her seemed to have little effect, for she now began hysterically to rush around the table, tambourine in hand, hair flying, head thrown back and her body flung into the air like one

of those maenads whose wild and well-nigh impossible postures still delight us on ancient monuments.

Encouraged by the talents and hubbub of the children, everyone tried to contribute something to the general entertainment. The women sang several canons, Laertes did an impersonation of a nightingale, and the Pedant treated them to a pianissimo concerto on the Jew's harp. All sorts of games were started, hands clasped and grasped beneath the table, sometimes with a definite indication of hope and affection. Madame Melina, so it seemed, did not attempt to conceal her strong liking for Wilhelm. It was already well into the night when Aurelie, who seemed to be the only person still in control of herself, rose and urged the others to break it up.

As everyone was leaving, Serlo gave a firework display, imitating the noise of rockets, squibs and firewheels; he did this with his mouth so skillfully that the illusion was complete if one closed one's eyes. After that everybody got up, the gentlemen gave their arms to the ladies and escorted them home. Wilhelm and Aurelie were the last to leave. On the stairs he was met by the stage manager, who said: "This is the veil in which the Ghost disappeared. It was caught in the trapdoor, and we have just discovered it." "A wondrous relic, indeed!" said Wilhelm, taking it from him. At that very moment he seemed to be grasped by his left arm, and at the same time felt a sharp pain. Mignon had been hiding, and seizing hold of him, she bit him in the arm, rushed past him on the stairs and disappeared.

When our friends emerged into the fresh air, they almost all felt that they had indulged themselves a little too much that evening, and they separated, without bidding each other good night.

Wilhelm threw off his clothes as soon as he got to his room, put out the light and dropped into bed. He fell asleep in no time, but was aroused by a noise which seemed to come from behind the stove. The image of the king in arms came before his heated imagination, and he sat up in order to address the spirit, only to find himself drawn back by a pair of tender arms, his mouth smothered by passionate kisses, and against his chest the breast of another that he did not dare to push aside.

Chapter Thirteen

Next day Wilhelm arose with an uncomfortable feeling, and found his bed empty. His head was still fuzzy from the not yet dispelled intoxication of the evening before, and the memory of the unknown nocturnal visit made him uneasy. His first guess was that it had been Philine, and yet the charming body he had clasped in his arms did not seem like hers. He had fallen asleep amidst eager caresses alongside his mysterious, silent visitor, but now there was no trace of who it was. He jumped up, dressed, and noticed that his door, which

he usually kept locked, was ajar; he simply could not remember whether he had closed it the previous evening.

But the most mysterious thing of all was that he found the Ghost's veil lying on his bed. He had probably himself flung it down when he brought it home with him. It was of grey crepe, and there was a border with some words embroidered in black letters. He opened it out, and this is what he read: *For the first and last time, young man, flee!* He was astonished, not knowing what to make of this.

At that very moment Mignon entered, bringing him his breakfast. Wilhelm was surprised by the child's appearance, indeed he was frightened by it. She seemed to have grown taller during the night. She strode up to him with a certain dignity, and looked into his eyes with such a serious expression that he had to turn away. She did not touch him as she usually did—clasping his hand, kissing him on the mouth or cheek or arm or shoulder—but quickly left the room once she had put his things in order.

The time arrived for the reading rehearsal. The whole company assembled, all of them out of sorts because of the jollifications of the previous evening. Wilhelm controlled himself to the best of his ability, so that he should not be the first to offend against the principles which he had advocated so firmly. The extent of his experience assisted him in this; for technique and experience fill up those gaps in any art which temperament and mood so often create.

Actually it might be true to say that one should never begin anything that is intended to last—situation, profession, or lifestyle—by a celebration. Celebrations belong at the end, when something is successfully completed; initial ceremonies exhaust those desires and powers that should encourage aspiration and sustain us in the difficulties of achievement. Marriage is of all such occasions for a celebration the most unsuitable, none should be more marked by silence, humility and hope.

The day crept on and none had ever seemed so ordinary to Wilhelm. Instead of the usual entertainment in the evening, people began to yawn; the interest in *Hamlet* was flagging, and no one found it at all appropriate to repeat it the next day. Wilhelm showed the Ghost's veil, from which it was concluded that the Ghost would not return. Serlo in particular was of this opinion. He seemed well acquainted with the advice of this strange character, but the words: "Flee, young man, flee!" defied explanation. How could Serlo agree with someone who seemed to want to deprive him of the best actor in his company?

It now became necessary to give the part of the Ghost to the Blusterer and the King to the Pedant. They both declared they knew the roles, and no wonder, for the number of rehearsals and the detailed discussions they had had of the play, meant that they were all so well acquainted with it that they could easily switch roles. Some parts were given a quick run-through, and when the actors went their separate ways at quite a late hour, Philine whispered to Wilhelm: "I must have my slippers back. Don't bolt the door." By the time he was

back in his room, he was in a state of confusion because of what she had said, feeling more and more certain that his visitor of the previous night had been Philine. We too must share this opinion, because we are not able to reveal the reasons which had made him doubt this and had aroused other suspicions. He walked restlessly to and fro in his room. And he did not bolt the door.

Suddenly Mignon rushed into the room, grabbed him and cried: "Master! Save the building! It's on fire!" Wilhelm jumped through the doorway and was met by a dense cloud of smoke pouring down from the stairs. From the street below the alarm was being sounded, and from above the Harper came rushing down the stairs breathless with his instrument in his hand. Aurelie came running from her room and deposited Felix in Wilhelm's arms. "Save the child!" she cried; "We'll look after the rest."

Wilhelm, who did not think the danger was all that great, decided he would first try to find the source of the fire and extinguish it before it could spread. He handed the child to the Harper and told him to hurry down the stone steps that led into a cellar and out into the garden, and to stay outside with the children. He also asked Aurelie to get their possessions out of the house by this route. He tried to go upstairs through the smoke, but there was no point in exposing himself to danger. For the flames seemed to be spreading from the neighboring house and had already engulfed the attic and one staircase; some who came to the rescue were, like him, overcome by smoke and flames. Nevertheless he urged them on and called for water, imploring them to retreat no more than step by step from the flames, and promising to remain with them. But at this moment Mignon rushed up crying: "Master! Save your Felix! The old man has gone mad! He's killing him!" Without a moment's hesitation Wilhelm tore down the stairs with Mignon close at his heels.

At the bottom of the staircase, just where it led into the cellar, he stopped in horror. Great bundles of straw and brushwood were stored there, and were now burning fiercely. Felix was lying on the ground and crying. The old man stood leaning against the wall, his head bowed. "What are you doing, you wretched man?" exclaimed Wilhelm. The old man said nothing. Mignon picked up Felix and dragged him with difficulty into the garden, while Wilhelm tried to separate the burning wood and smother the fire but only managed to increase the power and heat of the flames. Finally he too had to retreat to the garden, his eyelashes and hair singed as he dragged the old man through the flames, who followed him reluctantly, his beard scorched in the process.

Wilhelm hastened to join the children in the garden. He found them sitting on the steps of a pavilion, Mignon doing her best to calm down the child. Wilhelm took him on his lap, questioned him, stroked him, but could not get any coherent information out of either of the children.

By now the fire had taken hold of several houses and was lighting up the whole neighborhood. Wilhelm inspected the child by the red light of the flames, but could find no wound; there was no blood and there were no bruises. He felt the child all over, but there was no indication of pain. Gradu-

ally he settled down to a certain delight at the flames and the orderly progression in which the beams and rafters burned and provided such splendid illumination.

Wilhelm did not think about the clothes and what he might have lost. He thought only of these two human beings, so dear to him, who had escaped such danger. He pressed the little one with unaccustomed intensity to his breast, and would have embraced Mignon with equal affection and joy, had she not gently resisted, taking his hand and holding it firmly.

"Master," she said (she had never called him that before this evening, having addressed him first as "Sir" and then as "Father"), "Master! We have escaped great danger. Your Felix was near to death."

Much questioning finally elicited from her that when they reached the cellar, the Harper had taken the candle from her and set fire to the straw. He then put down Felix, laid his hands with strange gestures on the child's head and pulled out a knife, as if he were going to sacrifice him. She had rushed up and pulled the knife from his hand, screamed, and somebody from the house, who was bringing some things into the garden, came to her assistance, but must in the confusion have gone away again and left the old man with the child.

By now two or three buildings were burning fiercely. Nobody had been able to escape into the garden because of the fire in the adjoining cellar. Wilhelm was more concerned about his friends than his possessions. He did not dare to leave the children and feared still greater misfortune.

He spent several hours in trepidation. Felix was fast asleep in his lap, Mignon lay beside him, firmly clasping his hand. At last they had succeeded in containing the fire. The burnt-out buildings collapsed, daylight came, the children began to shiver, and he himself, lightly clad as he was, found the morning dew quite intolerable. He took the children up to the ruins of the buildings where there was still a pleasant amount of warmth from the ashes and smoldering wood.

The new day brought his friends and acquaintances together again. Everyone was safe; no one had lost much.

Wilhelm's trunk turned up, and around ten o'clock Serlo pressed for a rehearsal of *Hamlet*, or at least of those scenes where the casting had been changed. Then he had some altercation with the police. The clergy were demanding that after such a judgment from God the theater should remain closed, and Serlo was declaring that a performance of this interesting play was just what was needed to brighten up frightened minds—as well as being some sort of compensation for what he had lost during the night. Serlo had his way, and the theater was packed. The actors played their parts with extraordinary vigor and even more freedom and passion than the first time. The spectators, their feelings heightened by nocturnal terrors and their minds, after the boredom of a distracting and ill-spent day more than ever prepared for interesting entertainment showed more receptivity for the extraordinary nature of the play than the previous audience. They were mostly drawn there by what they had heard

about the play, and so could not compare this performance with the earlier one. The Blusterer played the Ghost in the same spirit as the unknown stranger, the Pedant had carefully noted the performance by his predecessor, and his pitiful appearance worked very much to his advantage when, despite the purple and ermine, Hamlet truthfully called him a king of shreds and patches.

No one had ever inherited a throne in a stranger fashion. And although the others, especially Philine, made fun of his newly acquired dignity, he reminded them that so knowledgeable a man as the count had prophesied this for him, and much more, when he first set eyes on him. But Philine told him to be more modest and swore that she would put powder on his sleeves to remind him of the misfortune that had befallen him at the castle. He should wear his crown with humility.

Chapter Fourteen

They quickly looked around for new quarters and as a result the company became very scattered. Wilhelm had grown fond of the pavilion in the garden where he had spent the night; he soon got the keys and established himself there. Since, however, Aurelie was very cramped in her new quarters, he had to keep Felix with him, and Mignon would not leave the boy. The children had a nice room on the upper floor and he settled down in the lower part. They slept soundly, but he did not close an eye.

While the moon rose and illuminated the pleasant garden, the sad ruins from which smoke was still rising stood nearby. The air was mild and the night unusually beautiful. Philine had stroked his elbow as she left the theater and whispered something which he had not understood. He was confused and irritated, not knowing what to expect or do. She had been avoiding him for several days, and this was the first sign of recognition she had given him. Unfortunately the door he was to leave unlocked had been burnt, and the slippers with it. How she was to come into the garden, assuming that that was her intention, he did not know. He did not want to see her, though he would have liked to have it out with her.

What troubled him much more was the fate of the Harper, who had disappeared. Wilhelm was afraid that he might be found dead beneath the rubble. He had said nothing to anybody about his suspicion that the Harper had set the fire. For it was from the burning attic that he had first emerged, and his desperate state in the cellar adjoining the garden would seem to have been the result of some such unfortunate action. But during the police investigation it became apparent that the most likely source of the fire was to be found not in their building, but two houses away, and that the flames had spread along the adjoining roofs.

Wilhelm was pondering all this while seated in an arbor, when he heard someone approaching on a nearby walk. From the mournful strains he heard

he recognized the Harper. The song, which he understood full well, was about the consolations of someone who feels he is near to madness. Unfortunately Wilhelm could only remember the last verse:

Let me linger by the gate
Unobtrusive, silently,
Pious hand will give me food,
I move on to other doors.
Every one will show delight
Just to see my face out there,
Down their cheeks a tear will fall,
Why they weep, I do not know.

At this point he reached the garden gate from which a path led to the main highway. Since he found it locked, he tried to climb over the fence, but Wilhelm held him back and talked to him in a kindly fashion. The old man asked him to open the gate because he wanted to, indeed had to escape. Wilhelm explained to him that he could get out of the garden but not leave the town without arousing suspicion. But to no purpose! The old man persisted, Wilhelm would not give way and dragged him almost forcibly into the pavilion, shut himself up with him, and had an extraordinary conversation with him, which, so as not to torment our readers with scattered thoughts and anxious feelings, we will rather say nothing about.

Chapter Fifteen

Wilhelm was really perplexed as to what to do about the unfortunate old man, who was showing definite signs of losing his mind. His reflections were interrupted by Laertes who, accustomed as always to be here, there, and everywhere, had met a man in a coffeehouse who had been suffering from acute attacks of melancholy. This man had been placed in the care of a country pastor, who made a special business of treating such people. The pastor had once again been successful. He was in town, and the family of the man, now restored to health, were expressing their profound respect and thanks to him.

Wilhelm went immediately in search of the pastor, told him about the case, and came to an agreement with him that on some pretext or other the Harper should be entrusted to his charge. Parting from the Harper was extremely painful for Wilhelm, and it was only the hope of seeing him restored to health that made him agree to such a step, so accustomed had he become to see the old man around and listen to his music that was so expressive of his mind and his feelings. The harp had perished in the fire, but a new one was found for him.

Also destroyed in the fire was Mignon's meager wardrobe, and when new things were to be bought for her, Aurelie proposed that she should now at last

be dressed as a girl. "No, no!" said Mignon, and insisted on wearing something like her old outfit. So a new one of the same sort was provided for her.

There was not much time for reflection, for the performances were to start soon. Wilhelm often listened to the spectators, but rarely did he hear anything approaching what he would, in fact, have liked to hear, and more often things that depressed or annoyed him. One young man, for instance, described in glowing terms the splendid evening he had had at the first performance of *Hamlet*. But he went on to say, to Wilhelm's annoyance, that he had kept his hat on throughout the whole performance in order to irritate those behind him. He remembered this heroic deed with the utmost delight. Someone else said that Wilhelm had played the part of Laertes very well, but one couldn't be as satisfied with the actor who had played Hamlet. This confusion was quite natural, for Wilhelm and Laertes were somewhat alike, though it was a remote resemblance. Still another warmly praised his acting in the scene with his mother, regretting only that in this highly emotional sequence a white ribbon had popped out of his vest and spoilt the illusion entirely.

Several changes had to be made within the company. Since the evening after the fire Philine had made no sign of wishing to approach Wilhelm. She had taken quarters quite a way off—on purpose, so it would seem—spent most of her time with Elmiere and only rarely came to see Serlo, which was indeed gratifying to Aurelie. Serlo, who had always been well disposed towards Philine, visited her sometimes, especially when he hoped to find Elmiere with her, and one evening he took Wilhelm along. They were both amazed to find Philine in the inner room, in the arms of a young officer in a red uniform and white undergarments, whose face they could not see because it was turned away from them. Philine came to greet them, closing the door of the other room, and said, "You have caught me unawares, while I am having the most extraordinary adventure!"

"Not so extraordinary," said Serlo. "Let's have a look at your handsome and enviable young friend. You've whetted our curiosity so much already that we couldn't bear to be jealous."

"I must let you keep your suspicions for a while," said Philine jokingly. "But I can assure you that it's only a girl friend of mine who is staying for a few days with me incognito. You shall hear all about her later and you may well find her extremely interesting so that I shall have to exercise all my modesty and indulgence, for I fear you may forget your old friend for the new."

Wilhelm stood transfixed to the spot, for the red uniform had immediately reminded him of his beloved Mariane—the same figure, the same blond hair, though this officer seemed somewhat taller.

"For Heaven's sake," he cried, "do let us know more about your friend, let us see this dressed-up girl. We are now part of the secret, and we promise not to reveal it, but do let us see her!" "O how infatuated he is," said Philine. "Take it easy. Be patient. Not today!" "Then at least tell us her name!" said Wilhelm. "That would be keeping a fine secret!" Philine objected. "Well then at least her first name." "See if you can guess it," said Philine. "You can have three tries,

but only three. Otherwise I would have to wait while you went through the whole church calendar." "All right," said Wilhelm. "How about Cecilie?" "Not Cecilie." "Henriette?" "Not a bit of it. Go easy. Your curiosity should take its time." Wilhelm hesitated. He trembled, wanting to speak but unable to do so. "How about Mariane?" he stammered out. "Bravo!" said Philine, twisting on her heel as usual, "You've got it." Wilhelm couldn't say another word, and Serlo, not noticing his perturbation, went on urging Philine to open the door.

They were both extremely surprised when Wilhelm hastily interrupted their jocular banter, threw himself at Philine's feet and passionately implored her to let him see the girl, saying: "She is mine, my Mariane, the one I have longed for every day of my life, the one who still exceeds all other women for me. Do at least go to her and tell her I am here, I, the one whose first love, whose youthful joys were fixed on her, and who now wishes to justify himself for having abandoned her so cruelly, to forgive her for all she may have done to him, and make no further claim on her, if only he may see her just this one more time, see that she is still alive and happy!"

Philine shook her head and said: "My dear friend, do lower your voice! Let's not deceive ourselves. If this is really your friend, then we must be considerate, for she will not be expecting to see you here. She has come here for quite different reasons, and you must know that there are certain moments when one would rather see a ghost than one's old lover. I'll ask her, I will prepare her, and we will together consider what would be best to do. I'll send you a message tomorrow telling you at what time you should come, or whether you should come at all. You must do exactly what I say, for I swear that no one shall see this lovely creature against my will or hers. I will keep my doors better locked, and don't try to use an axe to visit me!"

Wilhelm implored her and Serlo tried to persuade her; but all to no avail. They had to give way, and left.

One can well imagine what a restless night Wilhelm spent, and how slowly the daytime hours passed while he was waiting to hear from Philine. Unfortunately, he had to appear on stage that evening; he had never suffered such torment in his life. As soon as the performance was over, he rushed to Philine's quarters, without waiting for an invitation. He found her door locked. The people in the house said she had left early that morning with a young officer, saying she would be back in a few days, but they didn't believe that because she had paid what she owed and taken her things with her.

Wilhelm was beside himself at this news. He went straight to Laertes, suggesting they should follow her and, whatever the cost, find out definitely who her companion was. Laertes reproached his friend for his impulsiveness and credulity. "I bet," he said, "it is Friedrich. He comes from a good family, he's madly in love with the girl, and he has probably extracted enough cash from his relatives to be able to live with her again for a while."

These assertions did not convince Wilhelm, but they did make him pause. Laertes insisted that the whole yarn Philine had spun them was highly improbable, that the figure and hair could just as well be Friedrich's, that the two of

them would already have twelve hours' start and not be easy to overtake, and, most important of all, Serlo could not dispense with either Wilhelm or Laertes for the performances.

Wilhelm was finally persuaded by these considerations to abandon any attempt at pursuing them himself. That same night Laertes found a trusty fellow to do it for them. He was a stolid man who had acted as courier and guide for several persons of quality but was at the time without employment. He was given money, informed of the whole matter, and given instructions to find the fugitives and catch up with them, never letting them out of his sight, and informing Wilhelm and Laertes when he discovered them. He mounted his horse that very same hour, and rode after the dubious pair, leaving Wilhelm somewhat more at ease.

Chapter Sixteen

Philine's departure did not create much of a sensation either in the theater or amongst the public. She had never been very serious about anything, was thoroughly hated by all the women, and the men preferred to see her off stage than on, so that her considerable talents as an actress passed unnoticed. The other members of the company worked even harder after she had left, especially Madame Melina, whose zeal and attention were remarkable. She took note of Wilhelm's principles, following him in theory and example, and acquired a certain something that made her more interesting. She achieved a correct style of acting, was able to reproduce the natural tone of conversation to perfection and even that of feeling to a certain degree. She learned how to adapt herself to Serlo's moods, worked at her singing to give him pleasure, and soon acquired sufficient skill in this for her to display her talents socially.

The company was enlarged by some newly engaged actors. Both Wilhelm and Serlo were influential in different ways, Wilhelm concentrating on the general meaning and tone of a play and Serlo conscientiously working away at all the details. The actors were fired by admirable enthusiasm and the public took an active interest in them.

"We're on the right path," said Serlo one day, "and if we stick to it, the public will get there too. It is quite easy to bedazzle people by presenting things in an outlandish and inappropriate fashion: but if one gives them an interesting production that is appropriate and sensible, then they will eagerly accept that. What our German theater lacks most is a sense of necessary limitations and restriction, everything is too higgledy-piggledy, too varied for us to have any standards of judgment—a fact that does not seem to bother either actors or spectators. My opinion is that it was not a good idea to extend the stage into a sort of endless panorama of nature; and now it is difficult for any director or actors to restrict themselves until acceptable limits have been established by public taste. Every valid society must exist within accepted boundaries; so

too any theater, if it is to be good. Certain mannerisms and turns of phrase should be eradicated, certain subjects and certain forms of behavior should be excluded from the stage. One does not grow poorer by restricting one's household."

They partly agreed and partly disagreed about that. For Wilhelm and most of the others favored the English style of theater, whereas Serlo and some others preferred the French.

They agreed to work through the most celebrated examples of both styles of drama when they had a free hour (which, as with all actors, was unfortunately quite often), and select what was best and most worthy to serve as a model. They did make a start with some French plays, but Aurelie left the room every time the readings started. At first they thought she might be sick; and then one day Wilhelm, having observed this, asked her about it.

"I will never take part in such readings. How can I listen and exercise judgment when my heart is torn to shreds? I hate the French language from the bottom of my soul."

"How can one hate a language which has provided us with most of our culture and to which we must still be indebted if we are to give our substance any shape and form!"

"My judgment is not based on prejudice!" Aurelie declared. "It is rather an unfortunate impression, a distasteful memory of my faithless friend, which has deprived me of all affection for that beautiful, cultivated language. How I hate it now! During the time of our friendship he always wrote to me in German, and what sincere, true, strong German! But when he wanted to be rid of me, he began to write in French, whereas previously he had done that only as a joke. I recognized the significance of this. For what he was ashamed to say in his mother tongue, he could now set down in good conscience. It is an excellent language for reservations, half-truths and lies—a language that is *perfidie*. Thank goodness that there is no German word I can think of to express the full meaning of *perfidie*. Our poor word *treulos* is an innocent babe in comparison. *Perfidie* is 'faithless,' mixed in with pleasure, arrogance and malice. What an enviable state of culture it is when so many nuances can be expressed in one single word! French is indeed the language of the civilized world and worthy of becoming the universal language so that people can all cheat and deceive each other. My friend's letters in French were always good to read. One could pretend, if one wanted to, that they sounded warm or even passionate; but on closer look they were nothing but phrases, cursed phrases! He robbed me of all pleasure in the language and its literature, even in those fine and precious works by noble poets in that tongue. I now shudder every time I hear a French word!"

She would go on like this for hours on end, venting her displeasure and totally disrupting everything. Sometimes Serlo would cut into these expressions of moodiness by some bitter remark; but usually the evening's conversation was wrecked.

Unfortunately, it is generally the case that something that is assembled by a variety of persons and circumstances rarely maintains its cohesion for long. Whether this be a theatrical company or an empire, a circle of friends or an army, a moment is usually reached when it is at its zenith, its best, its greatest unity, well-being and effectiveness. Then personalities change, new individuals arrive on the scene, and the persons no longer suit the circumstances and the circumstances the persons. Everything becomes different, and what had been unified begins to fall apart. One could well say that Serlo's troupe had for some time possessed a quality unmatched by any other German company. Most of the actors had their appointed place in it, with enough to do, and satisfaction at doing it. Their personal circumstances were tolerable, and every one of them seemed an artist of promise, for they had entered on their profession with enthusiasm and vigor. But it soon became clear that some of them were machines only able to achieve what could be done without feeling, and then those emotions began to make themselves felt, which usually tend to interfere with any well-organized undertaking and disrupt what sensible and thoughtful persons have striven to maintain.

Philine's departure was not quite so insignificant as had at first been thought. She had been very adept at keeping Serlo entertained, and had appealed, in varying degrees, to all the others. She had dealt very patiently with Aurelie's outbursts of violence, and her main concern had been to flatter Wilhelm. She had therefore been a sort of liaison between all of them, and her loss soon made itself felt.

Serlo could not exist without some little love affair. Elmiere, who had grown up quickly and, one could almost say, become quite beautiful, had been attracting his attentions for some time, and Philine was smart enough to encourage what she saw to be a budding relationship. "One must," she would say, "at times take to matchmaking; there is nothing else left when we grow old." As a result Serlo and Elmiere were already sufficiently acquainted for them to join forces when Philine departed, and their little romance had an even greater appeal for them because they had every reason to keep it secret from her father, who would not have been at all amused by such irregularity. Elmiere's sister was in the know, and so Serlo had to be attentive to both girls. One of their worst faults was a passion for sweetmeats, which one could almost call gluttonous. In this respect they were considered to be quite unlike Philine, who now began to take on in retrospect a new air of graciousness because she had seemed to live on air, eat very little and sip only the bubbles from champagne, and that with the utmost delicacy.

But Serlo, in order to please his beloved, had to combine breakfast with lunch and then supper with dinner. He also had a plan that he was anxious to carry out. Having noticed a certain affection growing between Wilhelm and Aurelie, he was eager that this should develop into something serious. What he had in mind was to transfer all the more routine aspects of managing the theater to Wilhelm and so acquire a reliable and active assistant such as his

previous brother-in-law had been. He had tacitly been transferring a good deal of this to Wilhelm and, with Aurelie looking after the finances, he was resuming the lifestyle he preferred. But there was one thing that deeply concerned both him and his sister.

The public has an odd way of reacting to persons of acknowledged merit by becoming less and less interested in them and favoring instead much lesser, but newly arrived, talents, making excessive demands on the former and delighting in everything about the latter.

Serlo and Aurelie had plenty of occasions to reflect on this matter. The new members of the company, especially those who were young and handsome, received all the attention and applause, whereas Serlo and Aurelie, despite all their efforts, left the stage without the welcome sound of clapping. There were certainly legitimate reasons for this. Aurelie's pride was very evident and her scorn for the public was well known, and Serlo favored individuals, but his sharp remarks about the ensemble were common knowledge and constantly bandied about. The new actors were either from other parts of the country and unfamiliar, or young, pleasant and needing help, so they easily gained their supporters.

Very soon there developed a certain amount of friction and dissatisfaction amongst the members of the company. For when it was observed that Wilhelm was taking over the duties of a producer, most of the actors became increasingly uncooperative as he tried to bring more order and precision into what they were doing and insisted that the mechanics of the production should proceed smoothly and with regularity.

In a short time the whole operation, which for a time had been running almost perfectly, became as undistinguished as that of any company of strolling players. Unfortunately it was just when Wilhelm, by unrelenting effort, had succeeded in mastering what the job demanded and had trained himself to meet these demands, that he came to the melancholy conclusion that this occupation did not merit the expenditure of time and effort that it required. The work was burdensome and the recompense inadequate. He would rather have done something which, when it was over, would have allowed him some peace of mind such as this work did not permit him. For once all the mechanical difficulties had been overcome, his thoughts and feelings were still totally occupied with reaching the goal which the mechanics were designed to achieve. He had to put up with Aurelie's complaints about her brother's extravagance, had to disregard Serlo's hints encouraging him in the direction of marrying Aurelie, and had to conceal his distress at what troubled him most, for the messenger he had sent after the dubious "officer" had not returned. Nothing had been heard from him, and our friend was afraid that he might have lost his Mariane for a second time.

Just at that time the theater had to be closed for a few weeks because of a period of state mourning. So Wilhelm used this opportunity to visit the pastor in whose care he had left the Harper. He discovered that the place where this

man was living was peaceful and pleasant, and the first thing he saw on his arrival was the old man giving lessons on his instrument to a young boy. The Harper was delighted to see Wilhelm again, stood up and shook his hand, and said: "You see, I am still of some use in this world. Please allow me to go on with what I am doing, for my time is carefully organized."

The pastor received Wilhelm warmly and told him that the old man was doing quite well and there was hope of a complete recovery. Their conversation quite naturally turned to methods of curing madness.

"Apart from the physical aspect, which often creates insuperable difficulties and requires the advice of a thoughtful doctor, I find the treatment quite simple," said the pastor. "Basically it is the same as one uses to prevent healthy people from going mad. One has to encourage them to occupy themselves, accustom them to the idea of order, give them the sense of having a common form of life and destiny with many others, and show them that unusual talent, extreme good fortune and excessive misfortune are merely minor deviations from what is normal. Then no madness will ensue, or if it is already there, it will gradually disappear. I have organized the old man's day so that he gives lessons on the harp, and helps in the garden. As a result he is much brighter in spirits. He wants to taste the cabbage he has planted, and he wants to give careful instruction to my son so that he will be able to play the old man's harp, for he wants the boy to have it when he dies. As a pastor I have not said much to him about his strange fears, but an active life brings with it so much occupation that he will soon feel that his doubts can only be overcome by activity. I don't want to rush things, but if I can get rid of his beard and his cowl, I will have achieved a lot; for nothing brings us closer to madness than distinguishing ourselves from others, and nothing maintains common sense more than living in a normal way with many people. Unfortunately there is much in our educational system and everyday life that preconditions us and our children to madness."

Wilhelm stayed for a few days with this intelligent man and heard lots of interesting stories, not just about mad folk, but also about some considered bright or even wise, whose oddities bordered on madness.

The conversation became even more interesting when the doctor made one of his frequent visits to his friend in order to assist and support him in his humane efforts. He was an oldish man who, despite his delicate health, had spent many years in the exercise of such noble duties. He was a great lover of the country, and could hardly exist anywhere but in the open air. On the other hand he was very sociable and for several years now had cultivated friendship with all the country pastors in the neighborhood. He tried to encourage everyone who had some useful occupation, and to suggest ways of spending one's time to those who had not. Since he was in constant contact with nobles, magistrates and judges, he had over the past twenty years quietly contributed to the advancement of agriculture and actively promoted crops, animals and human beings, helping to bring about what one may truly call enlightened atti-

tudes. "There is really only one misfortune that can happen to us," he would say, "and that is when some fixed idea takes hold of us which does not affect our active life and may detract from it. I have such a case at the moment. The persons concerned are a rich married couple of high station, but so far all my efforts have been fruitless, and I believe this case belongs in your territory, my dear pastor. If I tell you about it I am sure this young man will keep it to himself.

"One day when a nobleman was absent from his residence, someone had the not very laudable idea of dressing up a young man in the nobleman's clothes. His wife was to be deceived by this, and although this was presented to me as having been intended as a joke, I am very much afraid that there was the intention of leading the worthy lady astray. The husband returns unexpectedly, goes to his room, thinks he sees himself, and thereupon falls into a state of melancholy, convinced that he is soon to die. He consorts with persons who cajole him with religious ideas, and I don't see how he is to be prevented from joining the Moravians with his wife, and depriving his relatives (he has no children) of the greater part of his fortune."

"With his wife?" said Wilhelm, much alarmed by what he had just heard.

"Yes," said the doctor who simply interpreted Wilhelm's outburst as an expression of human sympathy, "and unfortunately this lady is burdened with an even greater sorrow which makes separation from the world by no means distasteful to her. When the young man was taking his leave of her, she was incautious enough not to conceal a growing affection for him. He boldly clasped her in his arms and pressed hard against her breast a diamond medalion of her husband that she was wearing. She felt a sharp pain, which gradually went away, leaving at first a small red patch, but then no trace. As a man I am convinced she has nothing to reproach herself with; as a doctor I am sure that the pressure on her breast will have no bad effects, but she is convinced that there is a lump there and when by feeling the place I try to dispel this illusion, she says that only then does the pain go away, for she has firmly persuaded herself that this will end in cancer, and with it all her youth and loveliness."

"Heaven help me!" said Wilhelm, striking his brow and rushing out of the house. He had never been in such a state of alarm.

The doctor and the pastor, surprised by this strange reaction, had to devote their full attention to him that evening when he returned and poured out reproaches on himself in an account of what had happened. Both men showed great concern for him, especially when he described his general situation in the darkest of colors.

The next day the doctor agreed to accompany Wilhelm back to town and do what he could for Aurelie, whom our friend had left in a disturbing condition. They found her worse than they had expected. She had a kind of intermittent fever; nothing much could be done about that because she herself induced and encouraged the attacks. Wilhelm's companion was not presented to her as a

doctor. He behaved pleasantly and cautiously. There was talk about the condition of her body and the state of her mind, and the newcomer recounted various stories of people who, despite a certain sickliness, lived to a great age; although nothing is more detrimental to the health of such people than intentional revival of passionate feelings. He also admitted that he had found it most beneficial for sickly people, whose health could not be completely restored, to cultivate religious sentiments. He said this quite discreetly, as if he were referring to past experiences of his, but he promised to bring his new friends a manuscript which they would find interesting to read. It had come from a lady now dead, who had been a friend of his and earned his great respect. "This manuscript," he said, "is something that I value greatly, and I am entrusting the original to you. The title, which I have myself supplied, is: *Confessions of a Beautiful Soul*."

The physician gave Wilhelm the best advice he could regarding diet and medication for the unhappy and wrought-up Aurelie. He promised to write, and if at all possible, to come and see her again.

During Wilhelm's absence, a change had begun to occur, which he could not have expected. Since he took over control of the routine side of the operation he had spent quite liberally, having his eye on the production in hand and getting what best suited in the way of costumes, sets and properties. He also told actors how indispensable they were, since there was no better way of getting the best out of them. Wilhelm felt justified in this because Serlo never claimed to indulge in precise reckoning and was satisfied with hearing his theater praised, and pleased when Aurelie, who managed all the accounts, told him they had no outstanding debts, and provided him with enough money to cover his expenses incurred extravagantly on behalf of his new loves and on himself.

Melina, who was in charge of the costumes, had been observing all this, and, with Wilhelm away and Aurelie increasingly sick, he coldly and maliciously suggested to Serlo that they should take in more and spend less, and either put some money aside or go on living it up even more than before. Serlo listened attentively as Melina came forward with a plan.

"I wouldn't like to suggest," he said, "that there is any one of the actors who is being paid too much. They are all worthy people and would be welcome anywhere. But for what they bring in, they are paid too much. My proposal would be that we should go in for opera; and as for straight plays, you could take on any of these yourself, all by yourself. Don't you feel nowadays that your talents are not properly recognized? Your colleagues are not first rate, they are just good, and so justice is not given to your talents which are truly outstanding. So why don't you feature yourself, as has been done before, surround yourself with mediocre or even bad actors for meager wages, work on the public through stage effects, as only you know how, and use all the rest to perform operas. You will see how with the same effort and expenditure you will create more satisfaction and take in infinitely more money."

Serlo was so flattered by all this, that no objections he might have offered would have carried any weight. He hastened to assure Melina that, with his

love of music, he had long wanted to do something of this kind; but he realized that public taste would be sidetracked even more, and this hybrid of a theater — half play and half opera — would simply eradicate what little taste there was left amongst the public for a major work of art.

Melina referred rather crudely to Wilhelm's "pedantic" ideals, his presumptuous claims of educating the public, instead of being educated by them; and both he and Serlo vehemently asserted that all they wanted was to make money, get rich and enjoy life, and to rid themselves of anyone who stood in the way of such plans. Melina regretted that Aurelie's feeble health did not augur a long life, but rather the opposite. Serlo seemed to regret that Wilhelm wasn't a singer, and thus indicated that he did not consider him indispensable. Melina came up with a whole list of savings that could be made, and Serlo saw in him a threefold replacement for his late brother-in-law. They both thought they should keep quiet about this conversation, and as a result felt more closely bound to each other. They took every occasion to discuss in secret everything that turned up, disapprove of everything that Aurelie and Wilhelm did, and in their thoughts promote their new plan.

But although they kept silent about the project, not betraying anything by word of mouth, they were not diplomatic enough to conceal by their behavior what was in their minds. Melina frequently opposed Wilhelm on matters that lay within Wilhelm's jurisdiction, and Serlo, who had never been indulgent toward his sister, became more and more bitter as her sickness increased and she deserved every consideration because of the passionate vicissitudes of her moods.

At this time they were preparing a performance of Lessing's *Emilia Galotti*. It was very well cast and they could all display the full range of their talents within the restricted compass of this tragedy. Serlo was just right as the sinister Marinelli. Odoardo, Emilia's father, was well played, Madame Melina played the mother with considerable insight, and Elmiere carried off the role of Emilia to her great advantage. Laertes played Emilia's short-lived fiancé Appiani with great style, and Wilhelm had spent several months studying the part of the Prince. He often reflected on a certain matter and discussed it with Serlo and Aurelie, namely: What is the difference between noble and aristocratic behavior, and to what extent the one is, or is not, part of the other.

Serlo, who played Marinelli straight, as courtier, without any caricature, had various good things to say on this subject. "Aristocratic behavior is difficult to imitate," he said, "because it is fundamentally negative and presupposes a long period of continuous experience. Such behavior should not present a display of dignity, for that would be liable to appear as formality and pride; it should rather avoid all that is undignified or vulgar. One should never forget oneself, always consider oneself as well as others, never allow oneself any lapses, do neither too much nor too little for others, appear not to be affected or disturbed by anything, never be hurried, always be in control of oneself and externally maintain an equilibrium however tormented one may be inside. A noble man can relax for a moment, a nobleman never. The

nobleman is like a well-dressed man: he will never lean up against anything and everyone will avoid brushing against him. He is marked off from others, but cannot stand alone. For as in every form of art what is most difficult has to be achieved effortlessly: the nobleman, despite his distinct status, has to appear in combination with others, never stiff, always pliant—always as the first but never putting himself forward. To appear aristocratic one really has to be an aristocrat. And perhaps that is why, on the average, women can more often give themselves this appearance than men, and why amongst men it is courtiers and soldiers who achieve it most readily.”

After this Wilhelm despaired of ever playing the Prince, but Serlo gave him encouragement, making some subtle observations about details and giving him a costume that would turn him into a really fine prince, at least in the eyes of the public.

Serlo promised to comment on Wilhelm’s presentation of the part when the performance of the play was over. But an unpleasant argument between him and Aurelie prevented any critical assessment. Aurelie had played the part of the Countess Orsina, the Prince’s cast-off mistress, in a way such as one is hardly likely ever to see again. She knew the part very well and had played it rather coolly in the rehearsals; but in the performance she opened up all the floodgates of her personal sorrow, and the result was a performance such as no poet could have imagined in the first heat of his invention. Tumultuous applause rewarded her anguished efforts, but after the performance she lay half lifeless in a chair.

Serlo, having already expressed his disapproval of what he called her exaggerated acting and the way she had bared her soul before the public (which was more or less acquainted with her unfortunate story), had ground his teeth and stamped his feet, as he often did when he was angry. “Just let her be,” he said, when he found the others grouped around her in the chair. “One of these days she will appear stark naked on the stage, and then they will really applaud.”

“Ungrateful wretch!” she cried. “I’ll soon be carried naked to where there is no applause anymore!” With this she jumped up and rushed to the door. Her maid had forgotten to bring her coat, the sedan chair was not waiting for her, it had been raining and a bitter wind was blowing through the streets. She was overheated, but they could not stop her from deliberately walking slowly and eagerly drinking in the cool fresh air. But by the time she reached home she was so hoarse that she could hardly speak, and she did not tell anyone that she was completely stiff from the neck down. Soon afterwards a sort of paralysis of the tongue set in and she began to mix up her words. She was put to bed; some things improved, but others did not. She was running a high fever and her condition became dangerous.

Next morning she was peaceful for a time, and sent for Wilhelm. She handed him a letter. “This,” she said, “has long been waiting for the appropriate moment, which has now come. I feel that my life is approaching its end. Promise me that you will deliver this letter personally, and add a few words of

your own to avenge my sorrows on this faithless man. He is not without feeling; my death shall at least cause him a few painful moments."

Wilhelm took the letter and consoled her, trying to remove the expectation of death from her mind. "No, no!" she said. "Don't deprive me of my only hope. I've been waiting for it for a long time and will embrace it gladly."

Soon after this the manuscript arrived from the doctor. She asked Wilhelm to read to her from it, and the effect that it had on her can best be judged by the reader from his own perusal of it in the next book. The poor woman's violence and pity suddenly all calmed down. She took back the letter she had handed to Wilhelm, and wrote another one, apparently in a much quieter frame of mind. And she instructed Wilhelm to console her friend for any grief that he might feel at her death, and to assure him that she had forgiven him and wished him every happiness.

From this time on she was very quiet and her mind seemed to be totally occupied with certain thoughts aroused in her by Wilhelm's reading of the manuscript. The decline of her strength was not all that visible, and Wilhelm was therefore shocked one morning when he came to visit her to find her dead.

He had respected her so much and had spent so much time with her that he felt her loss very acutely. She was the only person who was really well disposed toward him, for in these past days he had become only too conscious of Serlo's indifference. He therefore decided to deliver Aurelie's message immediately, and requested leave for a period of time. His absence was welcomed by Melina, who had been engaged in extensive correspondence to secure a male and a female singer, who were to provide attractive intermissions and prepare the public for the forthcoming productions of operas. The loss of Aurelie and the absence of Wilhelm would be compensated for in this way, and Wilhelm himself expressed his approval of such a scheme because it would permit him an extended absence.

He now conceived his mission as one of unusual importance. Aurelie's death had affected him deeply, and since he was losing her so early, he was bound to feel anger towards the man who had shortened her life and made her existence such a painful one.

Despite the last gentle words of the dying woman, he was determined to issue a severe judgment on the faithless friend when he delivered the letter. Since he could not leave this to the mood of the moment, he thought up a speech which became more and more emotional as he elaborated it. Once he was satisfied that his disquisition was well composed, he committed it to memory, and set out on his journey. Mignon was with him as he packed, and she asked whether he was going south or north? When he told her it would be the latter, she said: "Then I will wait for you here." She asked him for Mari-ane's string of beads, which he could not deny the dear creature; she already had the scarf. But she put the Ghost's veil in his knapsack, although he told her he had no use for it.

Melina took over the management, and his wife promised to keep a motherly eye on the two children, whom Wilhelm was not happy to leave behind. Felix was cheerful as he left, and when asked what he wanted Wilhelm to bring him, he said: "Bring me a father." Mignon took Wilhelm's hand, stood on tiptoe, and gave him a big, trusting kiss, but without any tenderness, saying: "Master, don't forget us, and come back soon."

And so, with many a thought and many a feeling, we leave our friend as he sets out on his journey and record at this point in our story a poem which Mignon had recited several times with great feeling and which we have neglected to offer before because of the pressure of telling about so many unusual incidents.

Bid me not speak, let me be silent,
My secret I am bound to keep,
My inmost heart to thee I'd open,
But fate decrees I may not so.

There comes a time when sun's advancing
Dispels the dark and brings the light;
The stony cliff unfolds its bosom
And hidden streams bestows on earth.

All men find peace in friend's embrace
Each breast unloads its pain in words.
My lips by solemn oath are closed,
Only a god may unseal them new.

Book Six

Confessions of a Beautiful Soul

Up to my eighth year I was a healthy child; but I have as little memory of those years as I have of my birth. Then, when I had just turned eight, I had a hemorrhage, and from that moment on I was all feeling and memory. Every little detail of what happened then is as present to me now as if it had occurred only yesterday.

During the nine months of convalescence which I bore patiently, the foundations of my present way of thinking were laid—or so it seems to me now. For during that time my mind received various impulses that helped in the shaping of a specific character.

I suffered and I loved—that was the rhythm of my heart. During my sharp spells of coughing and debilitating fever I kept very quiet, like a snail withdrawn into its shell; but as soon as I could breathe again I wanted to feel something pleasant, and since all other pleasures were denied me I entertained myself through eyes and ears. I was brought dolls and picture books, and anyone who came and sat on my bed had to tell me a story.

From my mother I liked to hear biblical stories, and my father entertained me with objects of nature. He had quite a nice collection, and would show me one drawer after another, explaining everything carefully. All sorts of dried plants and insects, anatomical specimens, human skin, bones and mummified objects found their way on to my bed, and birds and animals that he had shot were shown me before they were taken to the kitchen. And so that the Prince of this World should not go neglected in this company, my aunt told me love tales and fairy stories. I absorbed everything, and it all took root. I had moments when I intimately communed with the Invisible Being, and I can still remember some verses which I dictated to my mother at that time.

I often recounted to my father what I had learnt from him. I never took medication without asking where the ingredients came from, what they were called, and what they looked like. Nor had my aunt's stories fallen on barren soil. I imagined myself dressed in beautiful clothes and meeting the most charming princes who could not rest till they found out who this unknown beauty was. Then there was a similar adventure with a delightful little angel, in white garments and with golden wings, who was much drawn to me; and

this I kept developing in my mind till I almost reached the point that he actually appeared.

After a year I was more or less recovered, but nothing wild remained with me from my childhood. I couldn't play with dolls any longer, I wanted objects that would return my love. Dogs, cats and the many kinds of birds that my father fed—all these delighted me; but I would have given anything to possess a creature that had played a very important part in one of my aunt's stories. This was a lamb that a peasant girl had found in the forest and succoured, but there was a prince spellbound in that little animal, and he finally emerged as a handsome youth and rewarded his benefactress with his hand in marriage. I would so much have liked to have such a lamb!

But there was none to be found, and since everything around me was taking its natural course, I almost had to abandon all hope of having something so precious for my own. Meanwhile I consoled myself by reading accounts of miraculous adventures. Amongst these I liked best the one called the *Christian German Hercules*, the pious love story which was completely to my liking. For whenever anything happened to his Valiska—and terrible things did happen—the hero would pray before he rushed to her assistance, and the text of the prayers was included in the book, which pleased me greatly. My inclination toward the Invisible, which I had always felt in some obscure way, became strengthened by this reading. For God was to become my closest friend—that was certain.

While I was growing older, I read all sorts of things and not in any particular order. But I do remember that the book I then liked best was the *Roman Octavia*. The persecution of those early Christians, put here into a novel, totally captivated my attention.

But then my mother began to complain about my incessant reading; and to humor her my father would take the books away from me one day—and give them back to me the next. She was smart enough to realize that nothing was to be achieved in this direction, but she did succeed in insisting that I should pay equal attention to the Bible. I did not need to be compelled to do that, for I read the sacred books with the liveliest of interest. My mother was much concerned that no seductive books should come into my hands, and I myself would immediately have rejected anything of the baser sort. For my princes and princesses were all very virtuous, and I knew more about the natural history of the human race than I let appear, for I had learnt it mostly from the Bible. Puzzling passages I associated with particular words and objects that I encountered, and got to the truth in my thirst for knowledge and ability to put things together. If I had heard about witches, I would have had to become acquainted with witchcraft too.

I have to thank my mother, and my own curiosity, for learning to cook as well as reading books. There was always something worth looking at in the kitchen, and cutting up a chicken or a suckling pig was a real occasion for me. I would bring my father the innards, and he would talk to me about them as if I were a young student. He often took pleasure in calling me his errant son.

I passed the age of twelve, learnt French, dancing and drawing, and had the usual religious instruction. During the latter, many feelings and thoughts were aroused, but none that affected my state of mind. I was glad to hear God talked about, and I was proud to be able to talk about Him better than most of my peers. I eagerly read a number of books at this time that would enable me to blabber about religion, but it never occurred to me to ask myself what my situation was, whether my soul was a mirror that would reflect the bright sun of eternity. I had taken that for granted.

French I learnt with great enthusiasm. My teacher was a fine man. He was neither a superficial empiricist nor a dry grammarian; he was acquainted with various branches of knowledge, and had seen much of the world. He satisfied my desire for knowledge with many things besides language instruction. I loved him so dearly that I always awaited his arrival with heartthrobs. I did not have much difficulty with drawing and would have made more progress in that area, if my teacher had had more brains and more knowledge. But all he had were his hands and practice in using them.

Dancing was at first what I enjoyed least. My body was too fragile, and I only learnt to dance with the help of my sister. But pleasure in this activity increased greatly when our dancing master had the idea of arranging a ball for all his pupils.

Amongst the various boys and girls there were two who stood out from the others, two of the Chamberlain's sons, one the same age as myself, the other two years older, but both of them so handsome that their appearance surpassed what was generally considered to be beauty in children. Once I had seen them, I was quite unaware of anyone else in the group. From that moment on I paid more attention to my dancing and wished to dance as well as possible. How did it happen that these two boys singled me out, I wondered. Anyway, within an hour we were the best of friends and before the little celebration had come to an end, we had decided where we would meet again. What a joy that was for me! And I was simply delighted when next morning I received a bouquet from each of them with a polite little note inquiring how I was. Never again have I felt as I felt then. Pleasantries were exchanged, messages went back and forth, rendezvous were arranged at church or on walks, they invited me and my sister at the same time, and we were sufficiently cautious in disguising all this, so that our parents never learnt any more than we thought was advisable.

So now I had acquired two admirers at once. I could not decide between them, for I liked them both and we were all good friends. Suddenly the elder one fell seriously ill, and since I had often been very sick myself, I knew what to send him in the way of kind words and tasty morsels. His parents were so grateful for my attentions that they granted their dear son's wishes and invited me and my sisters to visit him as soon as he was up and about. The affectionate way he received me was not like that of a child, and from that day on my preference was for him. He warned me to keep this concealed from his brother, but his emotion could not remain hidden, and the younger brother's jealousy made this into a full-scale romance. He played one trick after another

on us, delighted in spoiling our pleasures, and increased the passion that he was determined to destroy.

So now I had found the little lamb I yearned for, and this passion of mine affected me like all other sickness: it made me withdraw from the busy throng, and silent. I felt alone and deeply affected, and the thought of God came back into my mind. He was my intimate companion, and I prayed and prayed for my ailing friend, shedding many a tear.

Childish as this whole train of events was, it nevertheless contributed greatly to the development of my emotional life. In our French lessons we were required by our teacher to write, not the usual translations, but letters of our own composition. I delivered my own love story using the names of Phyllis and Damon. The old man soon saw through this and, to encourage frankness on my part, he praised my effort highly. As a result I became even bolder, opened up my heart, and kept faithfully to every detail of the truth. I cannot remember at what point it was that he had occasion to remark: "How charming, how natural this is! But your dear Phyllis should take care, for this could soon become quite serious."

I was disturbed by the fact that he did not consider it serious already and, somewhat piqued by this, I asked him what he meant by "serious." He answered without any hesitation, explaining himself so clearly that I could hardly conceal my alarm. But then my irritation returned and since I disliked the idea of his harboring such thoughts, I summoned up my courage, defended my heroine and said, with flaming cheeks: "But, sir, Phyllis is an honest girl!"

Then he was malicious enough to tease me about my heroine and, since we were speaking in French, played on the various meanings of the word *honnête* to expatiate on the "honesty" of Phyllis. I felt how absurd it all was, and was completely bewildered. Not wishing to make me fearful, he terminated the conversation for the moment, but returned to it on other occasions. The plays and stories that I read and translated for him gave him ample opportunity to demonstrate that so-called virtue is a feeble protection against the claims of passion. I did not disagree anymore, but maintained my inner irritation, and found his various remarks troublesome.

I gradually lost all contact with my dear Damon, thanks to the chicanery of his brother. Soon after this, both these promising youths died. I grieved; but they were soon forgotten.

Phyllis grew up fast, quite restored to health and ready to make her way in the world. The crown prince married and took over the reins of government on his father's death. Town and court entered on a flurry of activity, and my curiosity found much to occupy itself with. There were plays and balls, and everything else associated with these, and although our parents restricted us as much as possible, we had to appear at court, where I was presented. Foreigners poured in, every house saw important people, several noblemen arrived with letters of recommendation to my family and still more were introduced to us. My uncle's house became a meeting place for people from all nations.

My worthy mentor continued to warn me, gently and yet pointedly, and in my heart I disliked him for this. I was in no wise convinced of the truth of his allegations, and perhaps I was right at the time, and he was wrong to think women so weak in every situation, but he spoke so persuasively that there was one occasion when I thought he might be right; this was when I said to him that since the danger was so great and the human heart so weak I would ask God to protect me.

This straightforward answer seemed to please him and he praised my intentions. But I had not meant this seriously, these were just empty words, for my feelings toward the Invisible One were well-nigh completely extinguished. The busy crowd of people surrounding me had so distracted me and borne me along, that these had become the emptiest years of my life. For days on end I had nothing to talk about, nothing salutary to think about, nothing to do but go along with the crowd. Even my beloved books remained untouched. The people I associated with had no inkling of serious study: they were German courtiers, and that class of people had at the time no trace of culture.

One would think that such a life had brought me to the edge of ruin. I lived in a continual whirl of gaiety, never had a reflective moment, never prayed, never thought about God or myself. But I consider it providential that none of the many rich, handsome, well-dressed men appealed to me. They had a certain lewdness that they did not trouble to conceal, and that scared me away. They laced their talk with ambiguities that offended me, and I maintained cold aloofness toward them. Their rudeness was sometimes quite beyond belief, and I did not mince my words on that score. My teacher had also told me in confidence that most of these disreputable customers constituted a danger not only to a girl's virtue but also to her health. So I cringed at the thought of them and became really concerned if one of them somehow got too close to me. I avoided cups and glasses, and even chairs they had been sitting on. As a result I became completely isolated, both morally and physically, and all the nice things they said to me I proudly took for incense that was scattered out of a sense of guilt.

Among the strangers was one young man who stood out: we jocularly called him Narcissus. He had acquired a good reputation in the diplomatic service, and hoped, with the various changes taking place at court, to get a good position there. He soon became acquainted with my father, and both his knowledge and his behavior gave him the entrée into the close circle of the most distinguished men. My father said much in his praise, and his handsome figure would have made even more of an impression if his whole manner had not shown a certain degree of self-satisfaction. I saw him, thought well of him, but we did not speak to each other.

He appeared at a big ball, and we danced a minuet together; but even that did not lead to a closer acquaintance. Then came more vigorous dances which, for the sake of my father, who was concerned about my health, I always avoided. I retired to a neighboring room and joined some older women at the card tables whom I was friendly with. Narcissus, having danced for a while,

came into the room where I was; when he had recovered from a nosebleed that had afflicted him while dancing, he began to talk to me about various things. Within a short while the conversation became so interesting, though without any trace of tenderness, that we lost all desire to resume dancing. For this we were teased by the others, but that did not trouble us. Next evening we continued our conversation—and preserved our health.

This is how our acquaintance came about. Narcissus called on me and my sisters, and now I began to realize how much I knew, what I thought and felt, and what I could express in conversation. My new friend, having always moved in the best circles, had not only a complete mastery of historical and political events, but also extensive acquaintance with literary matters, and every new publication, especially those in France, was known to him. He brought or sent me many agreeable and useful books, but this had to be kept even quieter than an illicit love affair. Learned women had been ridiculed, and even educated women were unwillingly tolerated, probably because it was considered impolite to put so many ignorant men to shame. Even my father, though he welcomed this new opportunity for me to improve my mind, insisted that this literary exchange should remain a secret.

Our relations with each other continued like this for almost a year, and I cannot say that Narcissus ever expressed any love or affection for me. He remained courteous and obliging, but showed no strong emotion; in actual fact it seemed to be the charms of my youngest sister, who at that time was extraordinarily beautiful, that appealed to him most. He bestowed on her all sorts of pleasant names from various foreign languages, several of which he spoke very well, delighting in introducing their individual idiom into his own German speech. She did not respond particularly to his pleasantries, for she was cut from a different cloth. She was impulsive and he was touchy, so they rarely agreed on details. But he won the good graces of my mother and my aunts, and so gradually became a member of the family.

I do not know how long we would have continued in this fashion, were it not for a strange episode that changed our whole relationship. I was invited with my sisters to a certain house where I did not enjoy going. The company was too mixed and some of the people there were, if not coarse, at least extremely vulgar. On this occasion Narcissus was invited too, so for his sake I was prepared to go, because I knew there would be someone there to whom I could talk as I would wish. We had a lot to put up with already at table, for some of the men had been drinking heavily; and afterwards we had to play a game of forfeits. There was a lot of noisy activity. Narcissus had to pay a forfeit, and he was told to whisper something pleasant in everybody's ear. He stayed too long with the lady next to me, who was the wife of a captain. Suddenly the captain boxed his ears so soundly that the powder from his wig flew into my eyes, for I was sitting right next to him. Once I had wiped my eyes and recovered somewhat from my fright, I saw the two men with naked swords. Narcissus was bleeding, and the other man, inflamed with wine, anger and jealousy,

could hardly be restrained by the rest of the company. I took Narcissus's arm and led him through the door and up into another room, and since I did not think he was safe from his crazy opponent, I bolted the door.

Neither of us thought that the wound was serious. All we saw was a slight cut on the hand. But then a stream of blood began to pour down his back, and we saw that he had a large wound in the head. Now I was really frightened. I rushed on to the landing to get help, but there was nobody there because everybody was still downstairs trying to tame the raging man. Finally up came a daughter of the house, in such gay spirits that I was really alarmed by her excessive mirth over what she considered an infernal hubbub and ridiculous performance. I urged her to send for a doctor, and she, in her own wild way, jumped downstairs to fetch one herself.

I returned to my wounded man, bound up his hand with my handkerchief and his head with a towel that was hanging on the door. He was still bleeding profusely; he was pale and seemed about to faint. There was no one nearby to help me, so, quite spontaneously, I put my arm around him and tried to cheer him up by coaxing and stroking. This seemed to restore his spirits; he retained consciousness but was deathly pale.

Finally our busy hostess arrived and was shocked to find my friend in this condition in my arms and both of us spattered with blood. For nobody had imagined that Narcissus was wounded; they all thought I had managed to get him out unharmed.

Suddenly wine, sweet-smelling waters and restoratives in abundance appeared from nowhere, a doctor turned up, I could well have left. But Narcissus held me firmly by the hand, I would have stayed there even if I had not been held fast. While he was being bandaged I continued to moisten his lips with wine, paying little attention to the fact that the whole company was now assembled around us. The doctor finished what he was doing, and the wounded man took a silent but grateful leave of me, and was carried to his house.

Our hostess then took me into her bedroom. She had to undress me completely, and I cannot fail to admit that when I first happened to see myself in the mirror while they were washing his blood off me, I thought I could consider myself beautiful, even without my clothes. I could not put any of these back on, and since everyone else was smaller or bigger than I, I arrived back at my parents' house much to their astonishment in an odd assortment of garments. They were much angered by the fright I had had, the wounding of our friend, the stupidity of the captain, in fact by the whole affair. My father was almost prepared to avenge his friend on the spot and challenge the captain. He chastized those present for not immediately taking action against such a murderous onslaught, for it was all too clear that the captain, after striking Narcissus, had drawn his sword and wounded him from behind; the cut on the hand had only happened when Narcissus tried to draw his own sword. I was extremely upset and affected by all this: but how can I express myself? The

emotion that had been lurking in the depths of my heart, had suddenly burst forth like a flame ignited by air. And if joy and pleasure are conducive to the arousing and secret nourishing of love, it is sudden fright that most readily causes love to declare itself decisively. My parents gave their young daughter medication, and put her to bed. And, early next day, my father went immediately to see his wounded friend, who lay quite ill with a high fever.

My father told me very little of what they said to each other, and tried to set my mind at rest regarding the possible consequences of the incident. There was talk as to whether an apology should be considered sufficient, whether the matter should be taken to court, or what else should be done. I knew my father too well for me to believe that he would consider the whole thing settled without a duel. But I kept quiet, for I had long since learnt from my father that women should not interfere in such matters. Furthermore, it did not appear that anything had occurred between the two friends that affected me. But then my father told me about a conversation he had had with my mother. Narcissus, he told me, had been greatly moved by the assistance I had given him, had embraced my father, declared he would be eternally in my debt and desired no joy in life if he could not share it with me. He had requested permission to regard him as a father. Mama repeated all this faithfully to me, adding the salutary reminder that one should not attach too much importance to what is said in the first heat of the moment. "Indeed no," I replied with affected coolness, and heaven knows what or how much I was feeling when I said that.

Narcissus was ill for two months, could not write because of the injury to his hand, but showed by various obliging signs of attentiveness that he was mindful of me. This unusual degree of courtesy became linked in my mind with what I had learnt from my mother, and my head was continually beset by fancies. The whole town was discussing what had happened. People talked to me about it in a particular tone of voice, and drew conclusions that concerned me greatly, much as I tried to dispel them. What had previously been normal flirtation, now became serious affection, and the more I tried to conceal my unsettled state of mind from others, the more intense it became. The thought of losing him terrified me, and the prospect of a closer relationship made me tremble. The thought of marriage inevitably has something frightening about it for a moderately discerning young girl.

These violent perturbations made me think once more about myself. The many images of a distracting life, which had been pursuing me day and night, were suddenly dispelled. My soul came to life again, but the communion with the Invisible Friend, so long interrupted, was not so easily restored. We remained somewhat distant from each other for a while; there was something there, but nothing comparable to what had been.

A duel took place in which the captain was seriously wounded, but I knew nothing about it until it was already over. Public opinion was all on the side of my beloved, who finally reappeared on the scene. With bandaged head and hand he was brought to our house. How my heart leapt at his visit! The whole

family was present, and there was a general polite exchange of thanks on both sides, but he did find the opportunity to give me a few secret signs of his affection, which only increased my agitation. When he was completely recovered he came to see us throughout the whole winter, on the same footing as before, and for all his signs of affection, nothing was openly said.

I continued to maintain myself in this fashion. There was no person I could confide in and from God I was too estranged. I had completely forgotten Him during those four wild years, and although I began to think of Him again now and then, my acquaintance had cooled off. It was only ceremonial visits that I now paid Him, and since I always wore fine clothes when I appeared before Him and gladly displayed my virtue, honesty, and the advantages I believed I had over others, He seemed to disregard me in all my finery.

A courtier would have been very disturbed if his prince, from whom he expected good fortune, had behaved like this toward him. But I was not discouraged by this, for I had all I needed—good health and comfortable circumstances. If God were pleased that I thought of Him, that was good; but if He were not, I still considered I had done my duty toward Him.

At that time I did not think about myself in this way, but this is a true picture of what my soul was like. Yet circumstances were to contribute to a change and purification of my feelings.

Spring came and Nareissus began to visit me unannounced when I was home alone. He came now as a lover, and asked me if I would give him my heart and, when he had secured an honorable and well-paid position, in due course my hand in marriage. He had already been given a post in our social circle, but since people were somewhat fearful of his ambitious nature, he was at first more kept back than speedily advanced in station; and since he had money of his own he was accorded only a meager emolument.

Strong as my inclinations toward him were, I knew that he was not the sort of man that one could deal quite openly with. I therefore constrained myself and referred him to my father, whose approval he seemed to have no doubts about, while wishing to be assured of mine without further delay. Eventually I did say yes, but insisted on the approval of my parents as a necessary precondition. He then made a formal approach to both of them, they expressed their agreement, and he was given their approval on the understanding that, as was soon to be expected, he should be advanced in position. My sisters and aunts were informed of this and sworn to secrecy.

So now my beloved had become my fiancé, and the difference between the two was very obvious. If only the lovers of all well-intentioned girls could be turned into prospective bridegrooms, our sex would be well served, even if no marriage resulted from such relationships. The love between two persons is not thereby diminished; it becomes more reasonable. Countless petty sillinesses, all the flirtatiousness and moodiness suddenly disappear. If our betrothed tells us we look better in our mob cap than in our best headdress, then any sensible girl amongst us will no longer care about how she does her

hair, for it is perfectly natural that he should think like a solid citizen and prefer a housewife to a society doll. And that applies to everything.

And if such a girl is fortunate enough for her man to be intelligent and knowledgeable, she will learn more than all the universities or all her travels abroad could teach her. She will not only absorb all the culture he gives her, but take pains to advance herself by this means. Love makes possible much that is impossible, and ultimately there emerges that submissiveness which is so proper and necessary to the female sex. A fiancé does not lord it like a husband: he asks and his beloved tries to sense what he wishes and to fulfill his desires before he expresses them. Experience taught me what I would not have missed for anything. I was happy, as happy as one can be in this world—that is to say, for a short while.

A whole summer passed in these tranquil joys. Narcissus never gave me the slightest cause for complaint. My fondness for him increased, my whole being was bound up with him; he knew this, and delighted in it. But in the meantime something of apparently little consequence developed, which gradually imperilled our relationship.

Narcissus acted toward me like a fiancé but never dared to of ask me what was as yet forbidden us. Yet our opinions differed sharply on the limits of what was virtuous and moral. I wanted to tread warily and would not allow any liberties that the world should not know of. He, used as he was to snacking, found this diet rather severe. This led to constant disagreements; he appreciated my standpoint but tried to undermine it.

I remembered what my old language teacher had said to me about things getting “serious,” and the arguments I had used at that time to counter his allegations.

In the meantime I had become somewhat better acquainted with God. He had given me such a beloved bridegroom, and I knew how to thank Him for that. My earthly love absorbed my whole mind and activated it to a point that my relationship with God did not conflict with it. It was quite natural that I should express my anxiety to Him, but I did not realize that what made me so anxious was something that I ardently desired. I thought I was endowed with great strength of mind and did not, for example, pray to be delivered from temptation, for in my thoughts I had moved far beyond temptation. In this tawdry garb of self-righteousness I made bold to appear before my God. He did not reject me; my slightest approach to Him left a pleasant impression in my mind, and this impression encouraged me to seek Him out more frequently.

Except for Narcissus everything else in the world was dead to me, nothing else had any attraction. Even my passion for dressing up took on the sole purpose of pleasing him, and if I knew he would not be there to see me, I did not devote much time or trouble to this. I liked to dance, but when he wasn't there, I felt that I couldn't abide all this moving about. Once at a brilliant soirée where he was not to be present, I could not find anything new to wear, or adapt what I had to what was fashionable. I was quite indifferent to both; or rather,

both were equally tiresome to me. My evening seemed to me well spent in playing some card game with elderly persons—something I normally had no desire whatsoever to do—and if it so happened that some old friend of mine teased me about this, I would smile for the first time in the whole evening. The same thing happened on walks and other social diversions:

Him alone have I selected,
Born was I for him alone,
Nothing but his favor craving . . .

I was therefore often lonely in society, and complete isolation would have pleased me best. But my busy mind could neither sleep nor dream: I went on thinking and feeling and gradually achieved a facility for expressing my thoughts and sentiments to God. Then different feelings began to arise within me though they did not conflict with the others. For my love for Narcissus was quite in accord with the plan of the whole of creation, and never conflicted with my basic duties. There was no opposition here despite the immense differences. Narcissus was the only person whose image hovered before my mind and claimed all my love; the other feeling was not connected with any image and was inexpressibly pleasant. I don't have it anymore and cannot give it to myself again.

My beloved, who knew all my other secrets, knew nothing about this. I soon noticed that he thought differently. He would often bring me books that attacked with light or heavy artillery what one could call communion with the Invisible. I read these books, because he had brought them to me, and finally could not recall a single word of them.

We also disagreed about studies and the acquisition of knowledge. His attitude was that of men in general. He made fun of learned women and yet kept trying to educate me all the time. He talked to me about everything except jurisprudence and, while constantly bringing me books of various kinds, repeatedly expressed the dubious precept that a woman should keep her learning more secret than a Calvinist his religion in a Catholic country. Although I found it natural not to present myself to the world as more intelligent and better informed than previously, he was at times the first not to be able to resist showing his vanity by praising the qualities of my mind.

One well-known man of the world, highly regarded for his influence, talents and intelligence, who was receiving great acclaim at our court, singled out Narcissus and associated with him continually. They argued about the virtuousness of women. Narcissus imparted to me the general drift of their conversation. I did not hesitate to add my comments, and my friend asked me to set these down in writing. I could write French fairly fluently, having laid a good foundation for this with my old teacher. My correspondence with my friend had been in French, and at that time one could acquire refinement and culture only by reading French books. My little essay pleased the count, and I also had to give him some short poems that I had recently written. Narcissus seemed

quite unconstrained in his desire to benefit his beloved, and the whole episode ended to his delight with the count sending him an elegant rhymed epistle in French just as he was about to leave us, which referred back to their friendly arguments and praised Narcissus for being about to acquire, after so many doubts and errors, a true sense of what virtue is, and that in the arms of a charming and virtuous wife.

The poem was shown first to me, and then to all and sundry, and everyone had his own opinions about it. There were various episodes of this kind, and as a result every newcomer whom Narcissus thought well of, was introduced into our household.

Another count and his family spent some time in our town because of the excellent doctor that we had there. Narcissus was treated like a son by this family, and he took me along to see them. The conversation between these distinguished persons was a real delight for heart and mind, and even the usual social diversions did not seem here so empty as elsewhere. Everyone knew how we stood in relation to each other. They treated us as circumstances demanded, and never broached the essential. I mention this particular family because my acquaintance with them was to have a considerable influence on the further course of my life.

We had now been betrothed for almost a year, and our springtime was past. Summer arrived, and everything became hotter and more serious.

Through several unexpected deaths, certain positions at court had become open for which Narcissus was eligible and qualified. The moment was approaching when my whole future destiny was to be decided. While Narcissus and his friends at court were doing all they possibly could to remove whatever disadvantageous impressions he might have created, so that they might help him to secure the desired position, I myself addressed my suit to the Invisible Friend. I was received in such friendly fashion that I took pleasure in returning to Him. I expressed quite openly my desire that Narcissus should obtain the position, but my entreaties were not insistent, nor did I demand that this should come about because of my own prayers.

The position was filled by a very inferior competitor. I was appalled at the news, rushed to my room, and closed the door firmly. My first bitter reaction was to burst into tears; my next thought was that this could not have happened just by chance, and so I decided to accept it in the belief that this apparent misfortune would rebound to my advantage. And then my tenderest feelings came to the fore, dispelling the clouds of my grief. I felt that, with the help I had, anything could be endured. And I went to dinner in a tranquil frame of mind, much to the amazement of the other members of the household.

Narcissus did not have my strength of mind, and I had to console him. He had to suffer unpleasantness even from his own family and this disturbed him, but our relationship was based so much on trust that he confided in me about everything. His negotiations to find a position elsewhere were equally unsuccessful; I suffered on his account and my own, but took everything to the place

where my concerns had been so well received. My experiences in this quarter were so soothing that I returned there ever more often, always seeking the consolation that I had found before. But I did not find it always. I felt like someone wishing to warm himself in the sun when the shadow obstructs him. What was causing this? I asked myself, seeking the reason and coming to the conclusion that it all depended on the state of my own soul: if it were not entirely directed straight toward God, I remained unwarmed, felt no reciprocity, could not make out His answer. Then came the second question: What was obstructing my relationship? Here there was a whole realm of possibilities and I spent almost the whole second year of my friendship with Narcissus involved in this investigation. I could have concluded this earlier, for I soon found the answer; but I was not willing to admit it and tried in various ways to avoid doing so.

What I soon discovered was that foolish pastimes and trivial occupations were obstructing the directness of my soul's approach to God. The why and wherefore was now quite clear to me; but how was I to exist in a world where everything was folly and emptiness? Gladly would I have let the matter rest, and lived without thinking about it, like other people whom I saw prospering. But I could not do that. My inmost self constantly opposed it. If I thought of changing my situation by withdrawing from society, I found this impossible to do. I was now confined within a narrow circle, unable to give up certain relationships, and disaster after disaster poured increasingly in upon me. I would often go to bed weeping, and get up next morning after a sleepless night with nothing changed. I needed strong support and this was not to be vouchsafed me by God when I was running around in a fool's cap.

I then began to think about all my activities. First I considered dancing and card playing. Nothing had ever been thought, said, or written for or against these which I did not consult, ponder, discuss, elaborate on, or reject, tormenting myself in the process. If I were to give up such pastimes I would be sure to offend Narcissus, because he was mortally afraid of our being ridiculed for appearing so anxiously moralistic in the eyes of society. Since I did not engage in these things, which I considered foolish, dangerously foolish, out of a sense of pleasure to me, but simply in order to please him, all this became terribly difficult for me.

It would be hard for me to describe without tiresome repetition and undue wordiness the efforts I made to pursue these activities which diverted me but disturbed my inner peace, without closing my heart to the influence of the Invisible Being, and how painful it was to realize that the conflict was not to be resolved in this way. For as soon as I donned the robe of folly, this did not remain a mask but enveloped my whole being.

May I interrupt my narration at this point and offer some observations on what was going on inside me? What could have affected my taste and my whole temperament at the age of twenty-two, nay, even earlier, so that I felt no pleasure in things which provide most people of my age with harmless enter-

tainment? Why weren't they harmless to me? My answer had to be that these things were not harmless to me because I was not, like others of my age, unaware of my own soul. Indeed I knew from experiences which had come to me unsought, that there are higher emotions which guarantee us a pleasure not to be gained in idle entertainments, and that these higher pleasures provide a source of strength when misfortune overtakes us.

But the social pleasures and diversions of youth must have had a strong attraction for me, because I had not been able to engage in them as if I were not involved. But now I could, if I so desired, show great indifference to many things which were then bewildering to me and threatened to assume mastery over me. There was no middle course; I had to give up either these pleasant pastimes or the enlivening feelings within me.

But the conflict in my soul was soon settled without my being conscious of this happening. Despite the fact that I still had a certain hankering after the pleasures of the senses, they no longer provided me with satisfaction. Much as one may enjoy drinking wine, the pleasure dissipates when one finds oneself in a fully stocked wine cellar where the bad air is almost suffocating. Good clean air is better than wine—that I felt quite strongly—and it would not have taken much reflection on my part to see that what is good is preferable to what is attractive, had I not been held back by the fear of losing Narcissus's good graces. But when finally, after much debate and constant consideration, I took a sharp look at the nature of the bond that held me to him, I became aware that it was not all that strong and could easily be broken. I realized that it was a glass cover enclosing me in an airless space, and if only I could summon up enough strength to shatter it, then I would be free.

No sooner thought, than done. I removed my mask and began to act always according to the dictates of my heart. My fondness for Narcissus remained, but the thermometer that had been standing in hot water was now in the open air, unable to rise any higher than the temperature outside. Unfortunately, it sank considerably. Narcissus began to withdraw and act like a stranger. He had every right to do so, but my thermometer went down when he was no longer near. My family noticed the change, was surprised, and questioned me about it. I declared with almost manly defiance that I had made enough sacrifices, that I was prepared to suffer every adversity together with him until the end of my days, but demanded complete freedom to determine my actions according to my own convictions. I would never stubbornly insist on what I thought was right without listening to the opinions of others, but I myself must decide on my own happiness and I would not accept pressure from elsewhere. The reasoning of the greatest physician in the world would never persuade me to eat or drink something that was normally considered healthy and was enjoyed by many, if I myself knew it would be harmful to me, such as coffee, for instance, and I would never consider any action that bewildered me as morally suited to me.

Since I had been quietly working toward this conclusion for a long time, arguments about it were welcome rather than irritating to me. I aired my feelings and sensed the importance of the decision I had made. I did not yield an inch, and those to whom I did not owe a childlike respect were sharply dealt with. I soon won over my own family. My mother had entertained similar sentiments ever since she was a young girl, but they had never fully matured, for she had never been pressured by necessity, never had to pluck up courage to defend her convictions. She was pleased to see her latent desires fulfilled in me. My younger sister seemed to take my part; my other sister remained quiet and attentive. My aunt was the one who raised most objections. The reasons she gave seemed to her incontrovertible, and they were so because they were ordinary reasons. I was finally forced to tell her that she had no voice in this matter, and she, for her part, only rarely indicated that she still thought she was right. She was the only one, I should add, who really considered the matter closely, and quite dispassionately. I am not doing her an injustice by saying that she had no soul and very limited opinions.

My father reacted in accordance with his character. He expressed himself in few words, but did speak to me quite often about the matter. His reasoning was sensible and as such, irrefutable; and it was only my strong sense of being in the right that gave me the power to argue against him. But soon there came a change in the scenario: I had to appeal to his heart. Oppressed by his intelligence, I lapsed into emotional outbursts. I gave free rein to my tongue and my tears. I revealed to him the strength of my love for Narcissus, the compulsion I had been obliged to exercise over myself these past two years, and the certainty I now felt that I was doing right by being prepared to suffer the loss of my beloved and the likelihood of happiness, ever, if needs be, to sacrifice wealth and possessions for the sake of what I knew to be right; that I would rather leave my country, my parents and my friends and earn my bread elsewhere, than abandon my convictions. My father concealed his emotion, said nothing for a while, and then openly declared his agreement.

From that time on, Narcissus ceased to come to our house, and my father to attend the weekly gatherings where Narcissus would be present. The whole affair created quite a stir at court and in the town. People spoke about it in the way that such things are usually discussed when the public feels heavily involved, because it had been pampered into thinking it can exert some influence on the decision-making of weak minds. I was sufficiently acquainted with the world to know that one is often reproved for doing something by the very same persons who persuaded one to do it, and, quite apart from that, my state of mind was such that all these fleeting expressions of opinion were of no significance.

On the other hand, I did not deny myself the indulgence of my affection for Narcissus. He had become invisible to me, and my feelings had not changed toward him. I loved him dearly—in a new way, and somehow more firmly than

before. If only he would not disturb my convictions, I would be his; but without this condition I would have refused to share a kingdom with him. For several months I kept these feelings and thoughts to myself, and then, when I felt sufficiently calm and composed, I wrote him a polite, but not affectionate letter asking why he no longer came to see me.

Since I knew that as a person he was not given to expressing his opinion on minor matters, but instead did what he thought was right without saying anything about it, I now presented my proposal as a matter of immediate importance. I got back a long letter which seemed to me rather tasteless, couched in a wordy style and empty phrases, saying that without a better position he could not offer me his hand, that I knew better than anybody how difficult things had been for him, that he believed a protracted and fruitless engagement might harm my reputation, and that I should permit him to maintain his present distance. As soon as he were in the position to make me happy, the promise he had given me would be sanctified.

I answered him immediately, saying that since our relationship was now public knowledge it might well be too late to patch up my reputation, of which my conscience and my innocence were the strongest safeguards. I relieved him of his obligation toward me without further hesitation, expressing the wish that he would thereby find happiness for himself. Within the hour I received a brief reply saying basically the same as his previous letter, namely that once he had secured a position, he would ask me if I were willing to share his joy with him.

This seemed to me saying as good as nothing. I told my relations and friends that the whole affair was over and done with, and indeed it really was. For when nine months later he did receive a most desirable advancement, he asked again for my hand in marriage, but this time with the condition that, as the wife of a man who would have to establish a suitable household, I should change my way of thinking. I thanked him politely, and tore my heart and mind away from the whole affair, with the same eagerness as one leaves a theater after the final curtain has been lowered. Shortly afterwards he found himself a rich and socially respected wife (which was now quite easy for him), and since I knew he would now be happy in the way he desired, I felt completely at ease.

I should not fail to mention that several times, both before and after he obtained his appointment, I received offers of marriage, all of which I declined without further consideration, though my father and mother wished I had been more accommodating.

After my stormy March and April, fine May weather seemed to be bestowed on me. I enjoyed good health and an indescribable peace of mind. Wherever I turned my thoughts, I knew I had gained by my loss. Young as I was, and full of feeling, I found God's creation much more beautiful than when I had to have parties and card playing to while away my hours in His lovely garden. No longer ashamed of my piety, I did not need to conceal my love of art and study.

I drew, painted and read, and found enough people to encourage me in this. In place of the society I had withdrawn from, or rather that had withdrawn from me, I gathered a small circle around me that provided much richer entertainment. I did have a leaning toward social life, and I cannot deny that when I had abandoned my former friends, I had shuddered at the thought of loneliness. But now I was sufficiently, perhaps even too well, compensated for my loss. My acquaintance grew not only with persons nearby, who shared my sentiments, but also with several from farther places. My story had become common knowledge, and there were many persons curious to meet a girl who valued God more than her betrothed. In Germany at that time a particular religious trend was noticeable. Several ducal and princely houses became concerned about the salvation of their souls. There were also members of the lesser nobility who shared the same concern, and it was even widespread amongst the other social classes.

The family of the count whom I mentioned earlier began to cultivate closer relations with me. Its size had increased by the addition of relatives coming to live in our town. These admirable people sought out my company, and I theirs. The family circle was a large one and in that household I became acquainted with many princes, dukes and lords of the Empire. My sentiments were no longer a secret to anybody, and whether they were respected or just tolerated, I attained my goal and was not assailed for this.

There was another way in which I was brought back into society. A step-brother of my father's, who had visited us only very occasionally, came and spent a considerable time with us. He had given up a respected and influential position at another court because things had not gone as he wished. He was a man of keen intelligence and sober character, and therefore very like my father; but my father had a certain gentleness, which made it easier for him than for my uncle to yield on certain matters, and, when something was against his convictions, not doing it himself but being prepared to let it happen, keeping his disapproval to himself or venting it only in the intimate circle of the family. My uncle was much younger, and his self-assurance was bolstered by his external circumstances. His mother had been very rich, and in addition he now had expectations of a sizeable inheritance from her close and distant relatives. He needed no financial support from anywhere, whereas my father had to eke out his modest means by what he earned from his position.

Domestic misfortunes had made my uncle even sterner. He had suffered the early loss of a loving wife and a promising son, and from that time on he seemed to want to keep aloof from everything that did not depend on his own will.

Occasionally one heard it said in our family, with some satisfaction, that he would probably not marry again, and so we children could consider ourselves heirs to his large fortune. I paid little attention to this, but the behavior of my siblings was affected by it. He was strong-willed but never contradicted anyone, preferring to listen attentively to the opinions of others and trying to

support them by arguments and examples of his own. If you did not know him you might think he shared your opinions, for he had such outstanding intelligence that he could transport himself with ease into the minds and thinking of everyone else. This did not happen so readily in my case, for I had feelings of which he had no comprehension. Although he was considerate, sympathetic and understanding in speaking to me about my sentiments, it was abundantly clear that he had no conception of the true reasons for my actions.

Secretive as he normally was, the purpose of his unaccustomed visit was eventually revealed. He had selected my youngest sister as the one he had decided on to get married and be given happiness in the fashion he desired. It is true that with her physical and intellectual gifts, especially when supplemented by a sizeable fortune, she could claim the very best of suitors. His feelings about me were demonstrated by his securing for me the position of a canoness, from which I soon began to receive emoluments.

My sister was not particularly pleased with his efforts on her behalf, and not as grateful as I was. She confided in me a matter of the heart that she had so far very wisely concealed, for she was afraid of what in fact did actually happen, namely that I would advise her in the strongest possible terms against a union with a man who should not have been attractive to her. I did my utmost, and was successful in persuading her. My uncle's intentions were too serious and too plain, and the prospect for my sister, worldly-minded as she was, too attractive, for her not to muster sufficient strength to reject an involvement that her own mind disapproved of. She began to cease evading the gentle hints of our uncle, and a basis was soon established for him to pursue his intentions. She became a lady-in-waiting at a neighboring court, where he was able to entrust her to the surveillance and nurture of a friend of his who, as chief governess, stood in excellent repute. I went with her to her new habitation. We were both well satisfied with the reception we received, and I was often obliged to smile at my new social role as a young, pious canoness.

Previously I would have been perplexed by this situation, maybe to the point of losing my head; but now I remained quite calm. I spent several hours having my hair dressed and decking myself out, with no other thought than that this was the fancy dress I was required to put on. I talked to everybody in the crowded halls without being affected by the cast of mind or appearance of any person that I met. When I returned home, the only sense I had was that of dragging my tired feet behind me. My mind profited from mingling with the many people that I encountered, amongst them several women who were models of all the virtues and of proper, dignified behavior, especially the governess to whom my sister had the good fortune to be entrusted for her education.

But on my return home I became aware of certain unpleasant physical results from my stay at court. Despite my extreme abstemiousness and strict diet I was no longer in complete control of my time and my powers. Meals, exercise, getting up and going to bed, dressing and going out for rides — none of this had

been dependent on my own will and inclination as it was back home. One cannot stand still in the midst of the social whirl without being impolite, and so I did everything that was required of me, and willingly, because I considered it part of my duties and knew it would not last long, but also because I felt in better health than ever before. Nevertheless the unaccustomed restlessness of my life must have taken a heavier toll on me than I had realized. For no sooner had I arrived home and given my parents a satisfying account of my doings than I suffered a hemorrhage which, although not serious and of short duration, left me noticeably weaker for a long time.

I now had to recite a new lesson to myself, and did so gladly. There was nothing binding me to the world of society, and I was convinced that I would never find there what was right for me. And so I entered on a state of peace and calm, and in renouncing one sort of life, I was sustained in life.

I had to suffer new afflictions when my mother was stricken with a serious illness, which lasted five full years till nature took its course. During that time there was much to test me. Often, when her anxiety became too acute for her to manage, she would call us at night to come and stand round her bed so that she might be at least distracted, if not made better, by our presence. Even more difficult, in fact almost impossible to bear, was the pressure on me when my father too began to feel wretched. He had suffered from violent headaches since the time of his youth; while frequent, they did not last more than thirty-six hours. But now they were continuous, and when they got really severe, my heart was torn with pity for him. In these troublesome times I was more aware than ever of my own physical frailty, which hindered me in the fulfillment of my most sacred, my tenderest duties, or made them extremely burdensome to me.

I was now able to examine myself to see whether the path I had chosen was one of truth or of fancy, whether I had only been imitating others, whether the object of my faith was a reality or not; to my great consolation I always found that it was. My heart was directed straight to God, I had sought and found communion with the "beloved ones," and this it was that lightened my burden. Like a traveller in search of shade, my soul sped to this place of refuge when all else oppressed me from without, and I never returned unsolaced.

In recent times many champions of religion, more from zeal than from true religious feeling, it would seem, have urged their brethren in the spirit to publicize instances of prayer being answered, probably in order to have chapter and verse with which to outwit their opponents by proof and argument. How little they know what true feeling is, how few real experiences they themselves will have had!

I can vouch that I never returned empty-handed when I went to God in distress and anxiety. That is claiming a lot, but I cannot, I dare not try to be more explicit. Important as all these experiences were for me at the crucial moments, any attempt to try to list them individually would be flat and make them sound insignificant, maybe improbable. I was merely happy that so

many different occasions had proved that I was not without God in this life, just as every breath I drew proved I was alive. God was near to me, I was constantly in His presence. That is what I can declare as the ultimate truth, and can do so without resorting to the language of theological systems.

How I wished that I could have lived without recourse to such systems. But who can so early reach a state of complete blissful absorption in his own self without reference to external forms and systems? I was seriously concerned about my eternal salvation, and humbly placed my trust in the experience and repute of others. I applied myself thoroughly to the system of achieving conversion advocated by the pietist theologians at Halle, but I could not adapt myself to it at all.

According to the stages of this system, a change of heart must begin with a deep sense of alarm at one's sinfulness. In this state of extremity the heart must recognize the punishment one has deserved, and have a foretaste of hell which will sour the sweetness of sin. Then one should experience a noticeable assurance of grace, but this will not often come readily in the process but must be sought after.

None of this was in any way applicable to me. For when I sought out God in all sincerity, He was always to be found and never reproached me with my past actions. I did see afterwards where I had acted unworthily, and I knew in what ways I was still unworthy, but the recognition of my failings did not cause me any alarm. Not for a moment was I overcome by the fear of hell, indeed the whole idea of evil spirits and a place of punishment and torment after death was entirely alien to my thinking. The people I knew whose hearts were closed to love and trust in the Invisible One, who lived without God, seemed to me extremely unhappy already, so that hell and external punishment would, I thought, constitute a lesser rather than a severer punishment. When I thought about those people whose hearts were full of hatred and closed to all that was good, loading evil onto themselves and others, closing their eyes by day in order to assert that there is no light from the sun, then they seemed to me wretched and miserable beyond degree. What sort of hell could one think of to make their situation worse?

For ten full years this was my mental attitude. It sustained me through many trials, including my beloved mother's suffering and death. I was honest enough not to conceal my serenity of spirit during these afflictions when I was talking to persons conventionally trained in piety. I had to suffer many a friendly reproof from them to the effect that it was high time I seriously understood the importance of laying a firm religious foundation in times of good health.

But there was no lack of seriousness in me. I allowed myself to be momentarily convinced by what they said, and would willingly enough have felt sad and terrified. But to my astonishment I found that I could not. When I thought about God, I was happy and content. Even during my dear mother's painful last days on earth, I was not afraid of death. But in these momentous

hours I learned much more than my uncalled-for instructors believed, and different things.

As time went on I became skeptical about the opinions of some well-known people, but I kept these feelings to myself. There was one particular woman friend, in whom I had confided too much, who was always trying to meddle in my affairs. I was obliged to break loose from her too, and finally told her firmly that she should not expend such efforts on me, for I did not need her advice: I knew my God and He alone should be my guide. She was very offended and I believe she has never quite forgiven me.

My decision to extricate myself in spiritual matters from the influence and advice of my friends resulted in my acquiring the courage to pursue my own course in external relationships. But without the help of my faithful Invisible Guide things would not have turned out so well for me, and I still marvel at the wise and propitious guidance that I received. Nobody really knew what I was about—not even I myself.

The thing, that evil thing that has never been explained, which separates us from the Being we owe our life to, the eternal Being by whom all that we call Life is sustained, the thing that is called Sin—this I did not yet know.

In my communion with the Invisible Friend I had the feeling of deep pleasure at the involvement of all my powers. The longing to enjoy this continuously was so intense that I would gladly forgo anything that impeded it; and here experience was my best teacher. But I was like a sick person without medication who resorts to dieting. It helped me somewhat, but not enough.

I could not remain all the time in isolation, although I found that was the best means of avoiding my natural tendency towards dispersing my thoughts. But when I returned to the hurly-burly, this affected me more strongly. My greatest advantage was that more than anything I loved to be quiet, and so ultimately I always withdrew to my solitude. In a kind of twilight state I recognized that I was weak and miserable, and tried to spare rather than expose myself.

For seven long years I persisted in this careful diet. I did not see anything wrong in myself, and I thought my state was enviable. Had it not been for some unusual circumstances I would have remained at this stage, and I departed from it in the strangest manner. Against the advice of all my friends I entered on a new human relationship. Their arguments made me hesitate at first, so I addressed myself to my Invisible Friend without delay, and since He expressed approval, I continued on my path without further concern.

A man of intelligence, feeling and talents had bought a house in the neighborhood. He and his family were amongst those newcomers whose acquaintance I had made. We were very much alike in customs, habits and domestic arrangements, and soon became close friends.

Philo, as I shall call him, was a man in middle life, who was extremely helpful to my father, whose powers were beginning to fail, in certain business matters. He soon became a close friend of the family, and since, as he said, he saw

in me someone who had neither the extravagance and vanity of high society nor the bloodless timidity of the conventiclers, we two became intimate friends. He was both agreeable and useful to me.

Although I did not have the slightest inclination to engage in worldly affairs or have any influence in them, I did like to hear people talk about them and discover what was going on around me. I sought dispassionate, clear information: feeling, affection and intensity I reserved for my God, my family and my friends. I may say that my family and friends were jealous of my attachment to Philo, and they were right in more than one respect to warn me about it. I suffered much in the stillness of my heart, for I could not dismiss their objections as entirely empty or selfish. I had long been accustomed to give less weight to my own opinions, but this time I could not stifle my convictions. I beseeched my God to warn, hinder, or guide me in this matter too, and since my heart did not gainsay me afterwards, I felt relieved, and continued along my chosen path.

There was a vague general resemblance between Philo and Narcissus, but Philo's religious education had given his emotional life greater unity and strength. He had less vanity and more character. Narcissus had been shrewd, meticulous, persistent and tireless in worldly matters; Philo was clear, sharp, quick and incredibly expeditious. From him I learned all about the private circumstances of those distinguished persons I knew by sight, and I enjoyed surveying the busy throng from my lookout. Philo did not withhold anything from me, and gradually told me all about his own public and private relationships. I was afraid on his behalf, because I foresaw certain situations and complications developing, and bad things came sooner than I had anticipated. For there were certain matters that he had always avoided telling me about, but he finally revealed sufficient of these to make me assume the worst. The effect of this on me was devastating, for I encountered experiences which were quite new to me. With infinite sadness of heart I saw in Philo some sort of counterpart to the hero of Wieland's novel *Agathon*, who had to repay the cost of his education in the sacred grove of Delphi with heavy overdue interest—and this second Agathon was the man I was so closely associated with! I was filled with ardent concern for him, I suffered with him, and we both found ourselves in a very strange state of mind.

Having occupied myself for a long time with the state of his soul, I turned my attention to my own. The thought that I was no better than he came over me and descended like a cloud which darkened my mind. I didn't just think this, I felt it, felt that I was no better than he, and felt it so strongly that I would not wish to have any such feeling again. The transition was not sudden. For more than a year I had been feeling that if some invisible hand had not prevented me, I could have become the foulest of evildoers, for I sensed the tendency in my heart. What a discovery this was!

Up to then I had not experienced the reality of sinfulness in the least, but now the possibility of sin had become terrifyingly clear and conceivable to me.

I was not yet acquainted with evil, but I feared it; I felt that I could be guilty, but I could not reproach myself. Convinced as I was that a disposition such as I now recognized mine to be, would not make for a union with the Supreme Being after death such as I hoped for, I did not have any fears of incurring such separation at present. Despite the evil that I discovered in myself, I loved Him, hated my own feelings, wished to hate them even more intensely, my only desire being to be freed of this sickness and this whole disposition toward sickness. I was sure that the Great Physician would not refuse me help in this.

The only question was: How was this defect to be overcome? By virtuous actions? This I did not even contemplate, for during the past ten years my exercise of virtue had been far more than outward actions, and yet the horrors I now recognized had been deeply ingrained in my soul all the while. Couldn't they have broken loose as they did when David saw Bathsheba? Was David not also a friend of God, and was I not deeply convinced that God was my friend?

Was this perhaps an inescapable weakness in all mankind? Are we to accept the fact that we sometimes sense the sovereign power of inclination and, with the best will in the world, can do nothing more than deplore what we have done and then fall into the same situation on a similar occasion?

I found no solace in treatises on morals. Neither the severity of their efforts to make us subdue our instincts, nor their accommodating attempts to make virtues out of instincts, were in any way satisfying to me. The basic ideas that my communion with the Invisible Friend had instilled in me, had a much more decisive importance for me.

Once when I was studying the songs written by David after that ugly catastrophe, I was struck by his assertion that the evil within him was already in the material from which he was made; but he wished to be freed from sin and prayed earnestly for purity of heart.

But how was I to attain this? The answer, I knew, was given me in symbolic form in the Bible, where it was written that the blood of Christ shall wash away all sin. I now perceived for the first time that I had not really understood these words I had so often repeated, and such questions as: What does that mean? or, How is that to take place? tormented me day and night. Finally I seemed to catch the glimmer of an answer: What I was seeking was to be found in the mystery of the Incarnation through which the Word, in which we and all things are made, becomes flesh. It was revealed to me in darkling distance that our ultimate maker once descended to the depths in which we travail, penetrating and absorbing them, passed through every stage of our human condition from conception and birth to the grave, and, emerging from this strange detour, rose once again to those clear bright heights where we too must dwell in order to gain happiness.

Why must we always resort to images of external conditions in order to speak of such innermost things? What are heights and depths, darkness and light to Him? Only we have an above and below, a day and night. And He became like us so that we might be part of Him.

But how are we to share in such immeasurable beneficence? By Faith, the scripture tells us. But what is Faith? Merely accepting the report of an event as truth, how can that help me, I asked myself. I need to experience its effects and results. It must require an unusual state of mind for human beings, to be able to make such Faith part of themselves.

"Grant me such Faith, oh almighty God!" was the prayer of my heavy heart. I leaned over the little table at which I was sitting, hiding my tear-stained face in my hands. I was in the state that we must be in if God is to hear our prayer; and how rarely are we in that state!

How can I find the proper words to describe what I felt at that moment? A strong impulse lifted my soul to the cross on which Jesus died. I cannot call it other than an impulse, like that which carries one toward an absent friend, someone one loves dearly, making a connection that is more intense, more real than one would have imagined. My soul drew nigh to the incarnate, the crucified One, and at that moment I knew what Faith was.

This is Faith! I cried, and leapt up half in fright. I examined myself in order to make quite sure what I did feel, what I did perceive, and I was soon persuaded that my spirit had acquired the faculty to rise aloft—a faculty that was quite new to it.

Words fail us when we have such feelings. I could clearly distinguish what I felt from any fancies of the mind—there were no imaginings, no images, and yet what I felt had the certainty of being attached to something definite, just as one's imagination conjures up the features of a distant loved one.

When my first rapture had abated, I recognized that what I was experiencing was something I had felt before, but never with such intensity. I had never been able to prolong such a state of mind for myself. I do believe that every human being has had some such feelings at one time or another; for it is undoubtedly this sort of experience that teaches us all that there is a God. From time to time I had been content to feel such an access of strength, and would probably have remained satisfied with this, had it not been for the misfortunes which had constantly and unexpectedly been my lot and the consequent diminution of my powers and abilities. But now, since that one great moment, I had taken on wings. I could now rise above all that had threatened me before, like a bird effortlessly soaring with joyful song above a raging torrent, beside which a dog remains standing, barking anxiously.

My joy was beyond description and although I revealed none of this to anybody, my family noticed a new radiance about me, without knowing the cause. If only I had maintained silence and striven to preserve in my soul the purity of the mood! If only I had not allowed myself to be misled by circumstances into revealing my secret, I could have spared myself a huge detour.

During the past ten years of my Christian experience I had not myself possessed the strength I needed, and so I had done what other serious-minded persons in my condition had, namely supported myself by filling my imagination with images related to God, which is definitely useful, for by this means the evil effects of injurious images are prevented. Our soul grasps at one or the

other of these spiritual images and by so doing it soars upward like a young bird flitting from branch to branch. So long as one has nothing better, this exercise is not to be discounted.

We are provided with images and impressions directing us toward God by the activities of the church, by bells, organs and hymns, and especially by the homilies of preachers. My desire to profit from all this was so intense that neither bad weather nor poor health would prevent me from going to church, and church bells of a Sunday were the only thing that would make me impatient when I was lying on my bed of sickness. I listened with great attention to our chief Court Preacher, who was an excellent man. His colleagues were also of value to me, and I knew how to pick out the golden apples of the divine Word from the ordinary fruit in such earthly vessels. I supplemented these public religious exercises with all sorts of private "devotional practices," as they are called, but all this did was to feed my imaginative powers and refine the activity of my senses. I had grown so accustomed to this course of action, and set such a high value on it, that I did not have the sense of anything higher. My soul had feelers, but no eyes; it felt, but didn't see. If only it would acquire eyes so that it could really see!

I still continued to go and listen eagerly to the sermons. But what an experience I had! I no longer found what I had previously valued. These preachers were gnawing away at shells, whereas I was enjoying the kernels. I soon grew tired of them, but I was too spoilt to limit myself to what I had discovered for myself. I had to have images for my feelings, impressions from outside, and I believed this to be a truly spiritual need.

Philo's parents had connections with the pietistic community at Herrnhut, and in his own library there were many writings by its founder, Count Zinzendorf. On several different occasions he spoke to me in clear and reasonable terms about these works, and urged me to look at some of them, if only in order to acquaint myself with a particular psychological phenomenon. I myself considered Count Zinzendorf as a thorough heretic; so I did not look at the Moravian hymnal either, which Philo had pressed upon me. But one day, lacking all other external stimulation, I chanced to pick it up, and, to my astonishment, found hymns in it which, in their own very different and strange form, seemed to point in the direction of my own feelings. There was no rigid, commonplace, school terminology in them. I became convinced that these people felt what I felt, and I took great pleasure in committing this or that verse to memory and sustaining myself for several days by this means.

Almost three months had passed since that moment when I had been granted insight into the truth. So finally I reached the decision to tell my friend Philo everything and ask him to let me have those books from his library which I was now extremely curious to see. I did this, despite the fact that there was something in my heart that strongly urged me not to.

I told Philo my whole story in every detail. Since he was one of the main characters in it, and since my account contained a homily that was a call for him to repent, he was deeply affected by it. He burst into tears; and

I was happy at the thought that a complete change of heart was taking place in him too.

He provided me with all the works I asked for, and I soon had more than ample food for my imagination. I made great progress in the Zinzendorf way of thinking and speaking. Let it not be thought that I do not continue to respect Count Zinzendorf's way of doing things. One must have just regard for what he does. He is no empty enthusiast: he speaks about great truths mostly in bold, imaginative flights, and those who have disparaged him, do not recognize or appreciate his qualities.

I became extremely attached to him; and if I had been my own master I would certainly have left my home and friends, and gone to join him. We would undoubtedly have understood each other well, but we would not have found it easy to get along with each other for a length of time.

Thanks be to my presiding genius, which kept me confined at that time to my domestic sphere! It was quite a big trip for me to go into the garden. The care of my ailing old father gave me plenty to do, and I spent my leisure hours in cultivating the noblest flights of my imagination. The only person I saw was Philo, whom my father loved dearly; but his frankness toward me had been somewhat curtailed by what I had recently said to him. The effect of my words had not been deep: he tried several times to adapt himself to my terms, but without success, and so avoided all further discussion of this subject, which was not difficult for him because, with his broad range of knowledge, he could always introduce new topics into the conversation.

So I became a Herrnhut sister of my own accord, and had to conceal this change of mind and inclination from the Court Preacher whom I had good reason to respect and had as my confessor, and his many excellent qualities were not diminished in my eyes by his strong opposition to the Herrnhut community. Unfortunately, this fine man would suffer great distress on my account and that of many others!

Several years previous to this he had elsewhere become acquainted with a certain pious, honest gentlemen, with whom he still maintained an active correspondence, for this man was an earnest seeker after God. As his spiritual mentor he was therefore deeply distressed when this nobleman embraced the Herrnhut persuasion and dwelt for a long time in their community. He was equally pleased when this same man fell out with the brethren and came to live in his own vicinity, placing himself once again completely, so it appeared, under his guidance.

The newcomer was displayed in triumph to the most beloved lambs of the pastor's flock, though he was not brought to our house, because my father was no longer seeing anybody. He was well approved of: The outward polish of the courtier combined with the inner sincerity of one of the brethren, and, in addition to that, many fine natural qualities that soon made him into a major saint for all those who came to know him, much to his spiritual patron's delight. Unfortunately his quarrel with the Herrnhut community was only superficial

in nature and concerned with external circumstances; in spirit he still belonged to them completely. He believed in the basic validity of the cause, but also did not reject the frills and flounces that Count Zinzendorf had added. He was by now quite accustomed to their ways of thinking and speaking, and although he endeavored to conceal this fact from his old friend, he necessarily came out with their hymns, litanies and metaphorical language when he saw he was in the company of like-minded persons, and thereby gained their approval. I myself knew nothing about all this, drifted along in my own way, and it was quite a while before he and I met each other.

One day I went to visit a woman friend who was sick, and when I got there I found several of my acquaintances deep in a conversation, which was broken off at my arrival. I pretended not to notice this, but did observe to my great astonishment several pictures of persons and events connected with Herrnhut hanging in fine frames on the wall. I quickly grasped what must have happened since I had last been in this house, and celebrated the change by reciting some appropriate verses. My friends were naturally amazed by this. We opened our hearts to each other and from that moment on were of one mind and intimate associates.

I now took opportunities to go out as often as I could, but unfortunately this was only possible once every three or four weeks. I became acquainted with the nobleman apostle and gradually with the whole clandestine community. I attended their meetings whenever I could and, because of my social sense, I took great pleasure in hearing testimony from others, and myself testifying to others about the things I had up till then worked out for myself and within myself.

I was not so completely absorbed by all this as not to notice how few of them understood the real meaning of delicate words and phrases, and even then were no more helped than they had been by the old symbolic language of church ritual. But I continued to use these words and expressions, not allowing myself to be led astray into thinking I was called upon to judge their hearts and minds, for, in my own case, many a harmless religious exercise had prepared me for higher things. I made my particular contribution by insisting, when my turn came to speak, on that meaning which is more concealed than expressed in words that deal with delicate and intimate matters; and, for the rest, tacitly agreeing that everyone should be allowed to express himself in his own way.

These quiet times of secret sociability were followed by a stormy period of open disagreements and hostilities, which produced factions at court and in the town and led to a real uproar. Our Court Preacher, that fierce opponent of the Herrnhut community, had come to the humiliating discovery that his best and most devoted parishioners were all siding with the brethren. He was deeply offended, and, having expressed himself quite intemperately in the first moment of shock, he could not later retract, even if he had wished to. There were violent debates, in which, thank goodness, my name was not mentioned, since I was only an occasional participant in what he considered their

horrible meetings, and because our zealot of a leader could not dispense with the support of my father and my friend Philo in his dealings with the townspeople. I maintained my neutrality in silent satisfaction, for to engage in discussion of such feelings and topics, even with well-meaning persons, had become distasteful to me when they could not grasp the essentials and only occupied themselves with superficial matters; and to argue about these things with adversaries when one could hardly make one's own friends understand, seemed to me useless and even disadvantageous. For I soon noticed that kind and noble persons, unable to keep their minds free of aversion and hatred, soon lapsed into injustice and, while striving to preserve some external set of forms, almost destroyed what was best in their own inner convictions.

However wrong this worthy man may have been in such matters and however much people tried to incite me to take sides against him, I could not deny him my heartfelt respect. I knew him well and I could easily adapt myself to his way of seeing things. I never knew a person completely without faults, but these are more conspicuous in superior persons. We earnestly desire that those who are especially privileged should not have to pay tribute or tithes. I respected him for the excellent man that he was, and hoped that the influence of my silent neutrality might help bring about peace, or at least an armistice. I do not know what effect I might have had on him; for God dealt with the matter quickly by taking him unto Himself. Over his bier all those wept who had but recently exchanged words with him. His righteousness, his God-fearing nature, was never doubted by anyone.

I too had to put away childish things at this time, for these took on a different aspect for me during this period of troublesome conflict. My uncle had quietly continued with his plans for my sister's future. He presented her with a young man of wealth and station as her future bridegroom, and produced a dowry as rich as could be expected from him. My father gladly signified his agreement, and my sister was free and quite ready and willing to assume the married station. The wedding was arranged to take place at my uncle's castle, family and friends were invited, and we all arrived in high spirits.

This was the first time in my life that entering a house aroused my admiration. I had often heard people speak of my uncle's taste, his Italian architect, his fine collections and library; but I had measured this against what I already knew, and had a very mixed image in my mind of what it would be like. How astonished I was at the impression of gravity and harmoniousness that came to me as I entered the house, and this increased with every new room that I walked into. Splendor and magnificence had usually led me away from myself, but here I felt led back into myself. The grandeur and dignity of the arrangements for all the festive celebrations aroused in me a sense of calm and composure, and it was just as incomprehensible to me that one man could have thought all this out and arranged for it to be done, as that many different persons could have combined their efforts to achieve such a unified, grand result. And with all this, our host and his helpers seemed quite at ease, totally without stiffness or empty ceremoniousness.

The marriage ceremony began quite unexpectedly in a heart-warming way, excellent vocal music came to us as a surprise, and the priest gave to the ceremony the solemn feeling of truth. I was standing next to Philo, and instead of wishing me happiness, he said with a deep sigh: "When I saw your sister extend her hand, it was as though I had been showered with boiling water." "How so?" I asked. "I always have that feeling at weddings," he said. I laughed, but have had good occasion to remember his words since.

The joyous state of the company, which included many young people, seemed even more striking because of the distinguished quality of everything that surrounded them. The household utensils, table linen, dishes and center-pieces were as fine as everything else. I had already thought that the architects seemed to belong to the same school as those who arranged the decorations, but now it seemed as if those responsible for setting the tables had been instructed by the architect too.

Since we were to be together for several days, our thoughtful and considerate host had provided various sorts of entertainment. I did not have the unpleasant experience I have often had in a large, mixed company, when people are left to themselves and tend to turn to the most trivial of pastimes so that neither the best nor the worst of them shall feel deprived of entertainment. My uncle arranged things quite differently. He had appointed two or three masters of ceremonies, if I may call them such. One of these was in charge of amusements for the young people—dances, excursions, and various pastimes which he thought up and himself directed; and since young people like to be outdoors and are not afraid of fresh air, the garden and the conservatory were turned over to them, with all the adjoining galleries and pavilions which, although only made of clapboard and canvas, suggested in these magnificent surroundings real stone and marble. How rare it is that the person who invites his guests to a festivity feels such a real obligation to take care of their needs and comfort! Hunting expeditions, card parties, short strolls, and occasions for intimate conversations were provided for the older guests, and those accustomed to go to bed earliest were given lodgings farthest removed from all the noise.

All these excellent arrangements made the space in which we were living seem like a world of its own, and yet, if one examined it closely, the castle was not all that big, and it would have been hardly possible to accommodate so many people, and attend to all their different individual needs, without a precise knowledge of its layout and a mind such as that of our host.

Equally pleasing as the appearance of a well-built person is the experience of a well-organized household that reveals the presence of an understanding and intelligent host. Just to come into a clean house is a pleasure in itself, even though it be lacking in taste and overornate, for it does at least show the presence of one aspect of a cultured owner. But how much more satisfying it is to feel the presence of high culture, even though this be only culture of the senses. This was visible to a high degree in my uncle's home. I had heard and read a great deal about art. Philo was himself a great connoisseur of paintings

and had a fine collection of his own. I myself had done a good deal of sketching; but on the one hand I was far too much occupied with my own feelings and expressing what I had to, and on the other hand everything I saw seemed to disperse my concentration. Now for the first time, external things brought me back to myself, and I learnt the difference between the natural beauty of the song of the nightingale and a four-part alleluia from human throats. I did not conceal my joy at this discovery from my uncle who, when everything else had been taken care of, spent much time conversing with me. He spoke very modestly about his possessions and achievements, but with great conviction about the principles that had governed his collections and their arrangement, and I could easily see that he was sparing my feelings by subordinating all the good that he was lord and master of to what I considered to be right and best.

"If we can imagine," he said to me one day, "that the Creator of the world should take on the form of His creature and inhabit the world for a time in this guise, then this human creation must seem perfect indeed if the Creator Himself could ally Himself so closely with it. In the concept of humanity there cannot be a contradiction with the idea of godhead, and if we often feel remoteness and difference from the godhead, then it is our urgent responsibility not to dwell on our weaknesses and faults like the devil's advocate but to seek out our finest qualities by which we can legitimately confirm our godlikeness."

At this I smiled, and replied: "Don't embarrass me so by your kind attempts to speak my language. What you have to tell me, is so important for me that I would prefer to hear it in your very own language, and then I will translate what I cannot quite accept of it, into mine."

"I will go on," he said, "in my own language without changing my tone. Man's greatest achievement is to be able to control circumstances as much as possible, and allow himself to be controlled by them as little as possible. The whole world is spread out before us like a stone quarry before a builder, and no one deserves to be called a builder unless he can transform these raw materials into something corresponding to the image in his mind, with the utmost economy, purposefulness and sureness. Everything outside us is just material, and I can well say the same about everything about us: but within us there lies the formative power which creates what is to be, and never lets us rest until we have accomplished this in one way or another in or outside ourselves. You, my dear niece, have perhaps chosen the best way; you have striven to unite your moral self, your profoundly loving nature, within itself and with the Supreme Being, and we others are not to be blamed either if we strive to know the full extent of our sensual being and actively promote its unification."

Through such conversations we became ever more closely acquainted with each other and I succeeded in making him speak to me without adapting to my way of thinking, just as he would with himself. "Don't believe I am flattering you," he said, "if I praise your manner of thinking and acting. I respect a person who knows quite clearly what he wants and steadfastly proceeds in that direc-

tion, with a true sense of direction and purpose. Whether the purpose is noble or not, and deserves praise or blame — that is only a subsequent consideration. Believe me, my dear, the greater part of misfortune, and what is considered evil in the world, comes about because people fail to recognize their true goals, or, if they do, to work steadily toward them. They are like those who have the sense that a tower should be built, but whose materials and efforts only suffice for a cottage. If you, my friend, whose highest aspiration was to come to terms with your moral nature, had adapted yourself to your family, a fiancé, or perhaps a husband, instead of making the great and bold sacrifices that you have, you would have been in continual conflict with yourself and never known a single moment of peace.”

“You have used the word ‘sacrifices,’” I said, “and I have often thought that we do sacrifice lesser things to higher aspirations, as if to a god, even though those lesser things are dear to our heart; as when a cherished lamb is brought to the altar lovingly and willingly for the sake of a beloved father’s health.”

“Whether it be reason or feeling that makes us abandon one thing for another, or choose this over that, it is my belief that steadfastness and persistence are the qualities most to be respected in any human being. One can’t have the goods and the money one pays for them at the same time, and a man who craves for the goods without the heart to pay for them, is in just as bad a state as one who regrets a purchase when he has already made it. But I am far from censuring such persons: they are not really responsible, but rather the complicated conditions of their existence that make it difficult for them to control themselves. For instance, you will find fewer bad innkeepers in the country than in towns, and fewer in small towns than in large ones. Why is that? Man is born into a limited situation, he can comprehend aspirations that are simple, readily accessible and precise, and he accustoms himself to using means that are close at hand; but as soon as he branches out from his restricted sphere, he knows neither what he would like to do nor what he is obliged to do, and it is a matter of complete indifference whether he is confused by a multitude of objectives or disconcerted by their loftiness and importance. Either way he will be unhappy at having to strive after something that he cannot combine with ordinary regular activity.

“Nothing can be achieved in the world,” he continued, “without serious-mindedness, and there is little of this to be found amongst those we deem cultured. They approach work and business affairs, art, and pleasures with a sort of self-defensiveness. They live their lives in the way one reads a pile of newspapers, just to be finished, and I well remember a young Englishman in Rome who once said at a party that he had polished off six churches and two galleries that day. People want to learn a lot, and know a lot, especially regarding those things which are not really important to them, and they don’t notice that hunger is not stilled by snatching at air. When I get to know somebody, I always ask at once what is he occupying himself with, and how and in what order. And my interest in him will always depend on the answers he gives.”

“Perhaps, uncle, you are rather too strict and deprive yourself of acquaintances that you could be useful to and really help.”

“Is one to be blamed for losing interest in them, seeing that one has labored for so long with them and for them, and all in vain? How one suffers in one’s youth from those who think they are inviting us to a pleasant excursion by promising us the company of Sisyphus or the Danaids! Thank goodness I have been able to keep free of such persons, and if one of them should chance to stray into my purview, I usher him out as politely as possible. For from such people one hears the bitterest complaints about the confusion of worldly events, the shallowness of learning, the frivolity of artists, the hollowness of poets, and the like. They never understand that neither they nor all those like them would ever read a book written according to their demands, that they are ignorant of what real poetry is, and that even a fine work of art will only earn their approval if it has already been accredited with excellence by someone else. But let’s stop talking about all this. Now is not the time to complain or censure.”

He directed my attention to the various paintings hanging on the wall. My eyes fixed on those which looked pleasant or had a notable subject. He let this happen for a while, and then said: “Now pay some attention to the spirit that produced these works. Noble souls like to see God’s hand in His creation; but why shouldn’t we give some consideration to the hands of His imitators?” He then drew my attention to some pictures that had not struck me particularly, and tried to make me understand that only study of the history of art can give us a proper sense of the value and distinction of a work of art. One must first appreciate the burdensome aspects of technical labor that gifted artists have perfected over the centuries, in order for one to comprehend how it is possible for a creative genius to move freely and joyfully on a plane so high that it makes us dizzy.

With this in mind he brought together a number of pictures, and when he explained them to me, I could not avoid seeing in them images and symbols of moral perfection. When I told him this, he said: “You are absolutely right, and one should not pursue the cultivation of one’s moral life in isolation and seclusion. We are more likely to find that a person intent on moral advancement will have every cause to cultivate his senses as well as his mind, so as not to run the risk of losing his foothold on those moral heights, slipping into the seductive allurements of uncontrolled fancy and debasing his nobler nature by indulging in idle frivolities, if not worse.”

I never suspected that this was aimed at me, but I did feel affected when I thought back to certain rather insipid things in those hymns which had contributed to my edification. I also realized that the images which had attached themselves to my spiritual concepts would hardly have found favor in my uncle’s eyes.

Philo had been spending a good deal of time in the library and now he took me there. Together we admired the selection and number of books it con-

tained. They had been assembled, in every sense of the word; for they consisted almost entirely of works that would help us toward true enlightenment and the achievement of proper perspective, either by providing us with the right materials or by giving us a sense of the unity of our mental powers.

I had read a great deal in the course of my life, and in some areas there was hardly a book that was not known to me. It was therefore particularly pleasant for me now to think in terms of a whole and observe where I had gaps, whereas previously I had always thought in terms of the confusion caused by limitation and the vast extent of what there was to learn.

We made the acquaintance of an unassuming, but very interesting man. He was a physician and a naturalist, and seemed to belong more to the presiding deities of the house than to its actual, present inhabitants. He showed us the collection of specimens which, like the books in the library, were arranged in glass cases along the walls of the rooms, enlarging rather than narrowing the space between them. This reminded me of the joys of my youth, and I showed my father several things that he had brought to the sickbed of his child before she had any real sense of the world around her. This doctor did not conceal the fact, either then or in our later discussions, that it was his interest in religious sentiments that made him seek me out. But he never failed to praise my uncle's tolerance and respect for everything that demonstrated and advanced the unity and worth of human nature, demanding this from everybody else, and consistently opposing and condemning every kind of mere self-satisfaction and exclusive narrowness.

My uncle was extremely happy at my sister's marriage, and he spoke to me several times about what he intended to do for her and her children. He had splendid estates, which he managed himself and hoped to bequeath to his nephews in excellent condition. He seemed to have special thoughts regarding the small estate where we were at the moment: "This I will only give to the person who knows, appreciates and can enjoy what it contains, who understands the responsibility of those who are rich and belong to the nobility, especially in Germany, to establish something that shall serve as a model."

Very soon the majority of the guests had departed, and we ourselves were getting ready to leave. To conclude the celebrations, my uncle most considerately provided us once again with an entertainment of the highest quality. We had openly expressed our delight at the unaccompanied choral music at my sister's wedding, and we had urged him to let us hear this again. But he had not seemed to take any notice. We were therefore extremely surprised when he said one evening: "The dance music has gone, our young, flighty friends have deserted us, even the married couple looks more serious than it did a few days ago. And so, since the time to leave has come, and we may never see each other again, or at least as we are now, this calls for a festive atmosphere that I cannot better induce than by having that music repeated which you asked for earlier."

He then had four- and eight-part motets performed by the same choir, now increased in size and profiting from further practice, and this, I may well say, gave us all a foretaste of heaven. So far I had only been acquainted with hymn-singing, in which pious souls, often with hoarse throats, believe they are birds of the forest singing praises to God, because of the pleasant feeling it gives them, or with the vanity of concert music that provokes admiration for the talents of the performer, but rarely provides even passing pleasure. But now I heard music issuing from the richest depths of noble, human hearts, through practiced organs and in perfect harmony, speaking to the very best in us and making us fully aware of our godlikeness. The motets were sacred, with texts in Latin; they were like jewels in the golden ring of this cultured, secular society. By them I was spiritually uplifted and made happy, without laying any claim to so-called spiritual enlightenment.

On our departure we were all given handsome presents. I received the cross of my order, more artistically and delicately wrought and more richly enamelled than is usual. It was suspended from a large diamond, by which it was fastened to the ribbon, and this stone he considered one of the finest from his collection of gems.

My sister left with her husband for his estates, and we all went back to our homes, returning, as regards external circumstances, to what seemed a very ordinary life. We had returned to earth from a fairy palace and had to accommodate ourselves to this, each of us adjusting in his own way.

The unusual experiences that I had undergone in the new environment of my uncle's house left me with pleasing impressions, but these did not continue to be so vivid in my mind, although he did all he could to sustain and revive them by sending me from time to time some of his finest and most agreeable works of art, and then exchanging these for others when I had had sufficient time to enjoy them.

I was too accustomed to occupying myself with the affairs of my own heart and soul and talking about these with like-minded persons to pay much attention to a work of art without soon withdrawing again into myself. It was my custom to view a painting or an engraving as letters in a book. Good printing gives pleasure: but who reads a book for the quality of the printing? A pictorial presentation had to say something to me—teach me, move me, improve me; and no matter how much my uncle had to say about works of art in his letters, I continued to react as I always had.

Not only my own nature but also external events, changes in my family, distracted me from such consideration, even sometimes from my own self, for I had to tolerate and perform duties which exceeded my feeble physical powers.

My unmarried sister had always been my right hand. She was healthy, strong and infinitely kind, and it was she who had taken over the responsibility of running the household while I was occupied with the care of our aged father. But she was struck with a catarrh that turned into pneumonia; and in three

weeks she was dead. Her death afflicted me so deeply that even today I hardly dare to think about it.

I was sick in bed myself before she was laid in her grave. The old trouble in my chest seemed to be flaring up again, I was racked by coughing and so hoarse that I could hardly speak.

My married sister had a miscarriage because of fear and anxiety. My poor old father was afraid of losing at one and the same time his children and all hopes of grandchildren. His justified tears increased my sorrow, and I prayed to God for the restoration of some degree of health in myself, asking merely that my life should be prolonged until after my father's death. I recovered, and was as well as I could ever be, assuming once more my obligations and fulfilling them as best I could.

My sister became pregnant again. Various concerns, which in such cases are usually borne by mothers, were loaded on me. She was not entirely happy in her marital life, but this was not something my father should be made aware of. I myself had to be the judge of such matters. Things were made easier by the confidence which my brother-in-law always placed in me. Both he and my sister were good people, but instead of being considerate of each other, they were always arguing; and in their desire to live in complete harmony with each other they never achieved unity in anything. I was now learning to deal seriously with worldly matters, and practice what I had been singing hymns about.

My sister gave birth to a son, and my father's indisposition did not prevent him from traveling to see her. When he saw the child, he was overcome with joy and satisfaction, and at the christening he seemed to me inspired, quite different from his usual self, almost like a spirit with two faces, one of which looked forward joyfully to the region he would soon be entering, while the other contemplated, full of hope, this new earthly life awakened in the boy who was descended from him. All the way home he never ceased talking to me about the child and its healthy appearance, and he expressed his eagerness that the qualities of this new citizen of the world should be well nurtured and developed. He continued to speculate on this after we arrived home, and it was not until a few days later that we noticed he had a kind of fever, which came on after meals in the form of an enervating temperature, though without any chills. But he would not lie down, and every morning he would leave the house to attend punctiliously to his business affairs, until finally some more lasting and more serious symptoms prevented him from this. I will never forget the orderliness and tranquility with which he attended to the affairs of the household and the arrangements for his own burial, as if it were the affair of someone else.

With a composure of mind unusual in him, which almost approached joy, he said to me one day: "Where has that fear of death gone which I used to feel so strongly? Why should I fear to die? God is merciful, the grave holds no terrors for me, I shall have eternal life." One of the most pleasant occupations in my

solitary life is to recall the circumstances of his dying, and nobody will argue me out of the sense I had then of the workings of some higher force.

My father's death changed my whole mode of living. From a life of strictest obedience and extreme restrictions I passed into one of greatest freedom, which I enjoyed like food I had long had to do without. Whereas I had usually not been able to spend more than a couple of hours each day away from the house, there was now hardly a day that I remained in my own room. The friends with whom I had only been able to snatch fleeting visits, now wanted to see me all the time, and I them. I was often invited to meals, walks and excursions, and never declined. But once I had run the gamut I came to see that the greatest value of freedom is not to do everything one wants to when this is favored by circumstances but rather to be able to achieve what is good and right by the most direct way, without let or hindrance. And I was old enough by now to arrive at this conviction myself without instruction from others.

What I could not deny myself, however, was to continue to strengthen as quickly as possible my contacts with the members of the Herrnhut community, and I eagerly participated in one of their very next functions. But here too I did not find what I had hoped for. I was honest enough to tell them this, and they tried to persuade me that their little group was nothing compared to a regularly organized community. I was prepared to accept that; but my belief was that the true spirit should be able to emerge from a small group just as well as from a large assembly.

One of their bishops, a pupil of Count Zinzendorf himself, devoted much attention to me. He spoke perfect English, and because I knew some too, he decided this was an indication that we belonged together. But I didn't think so at all, for his whole manner was very distasteful to me. He was a knife grinder from Moravia, and his whole way of thinking was that of an artisan. I got on much better with a certain Mr. von L . . . , who had been a major in the French army; though I could not display the same subservience as he showed towards his superiors — indeed it felt as though someone had slapped me when I saw his wife and other respected ladies kissing the bishop's hand. Meanwhile a journey to Holland was agreed upon, which, however, never came about — and that certainly turned out to my advantage.

My sister gave birth to a daughter, and now it was the turn of us women to be pleased, and think about how the little girl could be brought up as we had been. My brother-in-law, on the other hand, was very disappointed when, in the following year, another daughter arrived, for, with his vast estates, he wanted to have boys around to help him manage them.

Because of my feeble health I kept myself to myself, and achieved a certain equilibrium in my life of calm repose. I had no fear of death, I even wished to die, but at quiet moments I felt that God was granting me time to examine my soul and bring myself ever closer to Him. In my many sleepless nights I had a feeling which I find hard to describe. It was as if my soul were thinking without my body, looking on the body as something apart from itself, like

some garment or other. My soul vividly recalled past times and events and sensed what was to come. These times were all gone by, and what was to come would also pass; the body will be rent like a garment, but I, the well-known I, I am.

I was persuaded by a noble friend who became ever more closely acquainted with me, not to yield too much to the consolation afforded by this lofty thought. This was the physician whom I had met at my uncle's house. He had informed himself about the state of my mind and body, and he explained to me that such feelings, if nurtured without reference to external things, will drain us dry and undermine our existence. "Man's first task," he said, "is to be active, and one should use those intervals when one is obliged to rest, to acquire a clear knowledge of external things, for that will assist us in all our further activity."

Since he was aware of my tendency to consider my body as a thing apart, and because he knew that my constitution, its failings and the medical means of treating these were fairly well known to me, so much so that I had almost become a doctor myself in attending to my own ills and those of others, he directed my attention away from the human body and various salves to the other objects of creation around me, so that I wandered around as if in paradise and, if I may continue the metaphor, only after this was I allowed to sense from afar the presence of the creator walking of an evening in the cool of the garden. With gladness I now perceived God in Nature as clearly as I felt Him in my heart; and I gave thanks that He should have deigned to give me life by the breath of His mouth.

My sister and all the rest of us were hoping for the birth of another boy, which my brother-in-law dearly desired. But, sad to say, he did not live to see it happen. This fine man died from the results of an unfortunate fall from his horse, and my sister, after having given birth to a lovely boy, followed him soon afterwards. It pained me to look at the four children she left behind. So many healthy people had died before me, sick as I was; and was I not destined to see some of these promising fruits wither and die? I was sufficiently acquainted with the world to know how many dangers there are for a child—especially one belonging to the upper classes of society—when it is growing up, and it seemed to me that these perils had increased since the time of my youth. I felt that, with my infirmity, I was not in a position to do much for these children, if indeed anything. I was therefore very glad when our uncle decided to devote his whole attention to the upbringing of these dear little creatures. This, of course, was quite natural for someone of his frame of mind, and the children deserved it in every way, for they were comely and, despite their differences from each other, they all gave promise of becoming kind and intelligent human beings.

Once my physician friend had made me aware of family resemblances in children and relatives, I began to take special pleasure in following this up. My father had carefully preserved the portraits of his ancestors, and had himself

and his children painted by reasonably good artists, along with my mother and her relatives. We knew therefore the characteristics of the whole family, and, having pondered and compared these, we looked for similar traits of mind and body in the children. My sister's eldest son seemed to resemble his paternal grandfather, of whom there was a good portrait as a young man in my uncle's collection. This grandfather had liked to present himself as a fine officer, and the boy preferred nothing more than handling a gun when he came to see me. My father had bequeathed us a fine assortment of guns, and the little boy would not rest until I had given him a brace of pistols and a hunting piece, and he had figured out for himself how to manipulate a flintlock. He was not at all clumsy or hasty in his movements, but rather gentle and thoughtful.

The eldest daughter claimed the greater part of my affection, probably because she looked like me and, of all the four, it was she who clung to me most. But I must say that the more I observed her growing up, the more she put me to shame. I could not fail to be amazed at her; I might almost say that I developed respect for her. One could not imagine a more noble presence, a more peaceful disposition, a greater evenness of attention to every kind of goal or object. Never for a moment was she idle, and everything she turned her hands to became a worthy object. Nothing troubled her so long as she could do what was demanded of her by circumstances, and she could be quite content when she did not find anything that needed doing at the moment. This ability to remain active without feeling the need for some particular occupation, was something that I never again encountered. Her behavior toward the needy and suffering was always exemplary. I must confess that I myself had never had the ability to make an occupation out of works of charity. I was not parsimonious in my gifts to the poor, and often gave more than I should have in my circumstances, but in a way I was buying myself off, and if someone were to receive my full care and attention, this would have to be someone of my own flesh and blood. But with my niece it was just the opposite, and I admired her for this. I never saw her giving money to a pauper; what she received from me for this purpose, she would use to fulfill practical needs. She was never more attractive in my eyes than when she rummaged around in my clothes and linens, always finding something I was no longer wearing or using, then cutting it up and making a garment for some ragged urchin. This was her greatest delight.

Her sister soon revealed quite a different disposition. She had inherited many of her mother's qualities, showed promise quite early on of becoming very charming and attractive, and she seems to be fulfilling that expectation still, being very much concerned about her appearance and knowing how to dress and carry herself in a striking way. I can still remember the delight she showed as a little girl at looking at herself in a mirror when I put around her neck the lovely pearls my mother had bequeathed me, which she happened to find in my room.

As I observed these various characteristics in the children, I took pleasure in the thought that, after my death, my possessions would be divided amongst them and preserved by them. I could envision my father's guns passing through the fields on my nephew's back, and game hanging out of his hunting bag. I could see all my garments on the backs of little girls as they left church after their Easter confirmation, and my finest clothes on some modest burgher girl on her wedding day. For my niece Natalie took especial delight in decking out children and poor honest girls, though she herself showed no sign of love for, or need for attachment to, any visible or invisible being such as I had felt so strongly in my youth. When I thought that the youngest of the girls would be wearing my jewels and pearls at court, I was quite content to see my possessions, like my body, returned to the elements.

The children grew apace and to my delight they have become healthy, handsome human beings. I have borne with patience the fact that my uncle has kept them apart from me, and I do not see them very often when they are nearby or in town. A wonderful man, whom people take for a French abbé (though no one knows really where he comes from), has been entrusted with the supervision of all four children, who are being educated and provided for in different places. At first I could not perceive any plan or purpose in this education. But then the doctor informed me that the Abbé had convinced my uncle that, in order to promote a child's education, one must first find out where its desires and inclinations lie, and then enable it to satisfy those desires and further those inclinations as quickly as possible. If someone has chosen a wrong path, he can correct this before it is too late, and once he has found what suits him, stick to this firmly and develop more vigorously. I hope this strange experiment will succeed. Perhaps it may, with such good material.

But one thing I cannot condone about these educators, that they deprive children of anything that might lead to their communing with themselves and with their Invisible, and only true Friend. And I am often irritated with my uncle that for this reason he thinks I would be detrimental to the children. Nobody is really tolerant in practice, for however much someone may assure us that he is leaving a person to his own desires and inclinations, in effect he does all he can to exclude them from activities not acceptable to himself.

The manner in which these children are being kept away from me, is all the more distressing as my conviction increases of the reality of my faith. Why shouldn't this have a supernatural origin and a real, natural goal, seeing that it proves to be so effective in practice? Only through our practical activity do we become fully aware of our own individual existence; and why shouldn't we by this means demonstrate also to ourselves that there is a Being who gives us this power to do good?

Since I am always moving forward and never backward, since my actions are always drawing nearer and nearer to the idea of perfection which I have worked out for myself, and I find it easier every day to do what I think is right,

despite my bodily infirmity that restricts me so much—is this accountable solely to human nature, whose corruption I have become so profoundly aware of? Not for me, at least.

I cannot recall having followed any commandment that loomed before me as a law imposed from without: I was always led and guided by impulse, freely following my own persuasion, and experiencing neither restriction nor regrets. Thanks be to God that I am fully aware to whom I owe my happiness, and can accept my good fortune in humility. For I will never be tempted to pride myself on my own ability and powers, having so clearly recognized the monster that grows and feeds in every human breast, if some higher power does not preserve us.

Book Seven

Chapter One

The spring had arrived in all its glory. An early thunderstorm, which had been threatening to break all day, rolled down the mountains, the rain moved into the valley, the sun burst forth again in splendor and a marvelous rainbow appeared against the dark grey background. Wilhelm rode up toward it and gazed at it with a feeling of sadness. "Why is it," he said, "that the brightest colors in life always appear against a dark background? Must raindrops, or tears, fall if we are to experience true joy? A bright day is no different from a gray one if we observe it unmoved. And what is it that moves us but the silent hope that the native desires of our hearts may not remain without objects to focus on? We are moved by the account of good deeds, the contemplation of harmonious objects, and as a result we feel that we are not completely adrift in this world, but are drawing nearer to some sort of destination toward which all that is deepest and best in us has long been impatiently tending."

Meanwhile a traveler had caught up with him, walking briskly up to his horse; and, after a few innocuous remarks, said to Wilhelm: "If I am not mistaken, I have met you somewhere before."

"I think so too," said Wilhelm. "Didn't we take part in an amusing river trip together?"

"That's right!" said the other.

Wilhelm looked at him more closely, and, after a few moments of silence, said: "I don't know how it is that you have changed. At the time I thought you were a Lutheran pastor, but now you look more like a Catholic priest."

"This time, at any rate, you are not mistaken," said the man, taking off his hat and revealing the tonsure. "But where has your theatrical company gone to? Did you stay with them for a long while?"

"Longer than I should have. Unfortunately, when I think back on the time I spent with them, I seem to be peering into an unending void. Nothing about it means anything to me anymore."

"You're wrong about that. Everything that happens to us leaves its traces, everything contributes imperceptibly to our development. But it is dangerous

to try to draw up a balance sheet, for in doing so we become either proud and carefree, or depressed and discouraged, and the one is as bad as the other in its results. The safest thing remains to concentrate on what lies immediately ahead; and that, for the moment," he added with a smile, "is to make sure we find quarters for the night."

Wilhelm asked him how far it was to Lothario's estate, and he said it was just over the hill. "Then perhaps I'll see you there," he said. "I still have a few errands to do in the neighborhood. So goodbye for now!" With these words he hastened up a steep path, which seemed the shortest way over the hill.

"He's certainly right," said Wilhelm as he rode along. "One should think of the first thing one has to do, and for me nothing is more pressing than to deliver the sad message I am charged with. Let's just see if I can still remember my speech to put this cruel man to shame!"

He began to recite to himself his work of art. He could recall every word of it, and the more his memory was activated, the more his boldness and passion increased. Aurelie's sufferings and death were still very much in his mind.

"Spirit of my beloved friend!" he cried. "Draw nigh and give me a sign, if you can, that you are pacified and reconciled!"

With such words and thoughts he reached the top of the hill and observed on the other side a strange looking building which he immediately decided must be Lothario's residence. Originally it had been an irregular building with turrets and gables; but even more irregular were the later additions, some close by and others at a distance, connected with the main building by galleries and covered walks. All external symmetry and architectural distinction seemed to have been sacrificed to considerations of domestic comfort. There was no sign of ramparts or moats, nor of formal gardens or broad allées. An orchard and kitchen garden ran right up to the buildings, and there were other small domestic gardens set in between. A cheerful looking village was to be seen nearby; all gardens and fields seemed to be in very good condition.

Wilhelm rode on, immersed in his own impassioned reflections and hence not thinking much about what he saw around him, stabled his horse at an inn, and proceeded without further ado to the castle.

An old retainer received him at the door and informed him very politely that he would hardly be able to see the master of the household that day, because he had lots of letters to write and had already sent away several tradesmen. Wilhelm pressed him further and finally the old man gave in, and reported Wilhelm's arrival to his master. He came back and conducted Wilhelm into a large, ancient hall, asking him to be patient for a while because it might be some time before his master would be able to see him. Wilhelm walked restlessly up and down, casting a few glances at the lords and ladies whose pictures were hanging on the walls. He repeated to himself the beginning of his speech, and it seemed to him more appropriate than ever in the presence of all these people in armor and high-standing collars. Whenever he heard a noise he took up position so as to be ready to receive his adversary

with suitable dignity, hand him the letter and then assail him with a whole battery of reproaches.

After several false alarms he was beginning to get cross and dispirited, when in through a side door came a good-looking man in topboots and an unostentatious surtout. "What good news do you bring me?" he said in a kindly tone of voice to Wilhelm. "I'm sorry to have kept you waiting so long."

As he said this he was folding a letter that he held in his hand. Wilhelm, somewhat nonplussed, handed him Aurelie's communication, saying: "I bring you the last words of a lady friend of yours which will not leave you unmoved."

Lothario took the letter and went back to his room where, as Wilhelm could see through the open door, he first addressed and sealed a few more letters, then opened Aurelie's and read it. He apparently read it through several times, and Wilhelm, though he felt that the pathos of his speech hardly suited the unpretentiousness of his reception, nevertheless got ready to deliver his oration and was walking up to the dividing door when in from a door in the wall came the priest.

"I have just received the strangest message," said Lothario to the Abbé, and then, turning to Wilhelm, he said: "Excuse me if I am at the moment not in the mood to talk further with you. Do stay the night here with us! And would you please, Abbé, look after our guest and see that he has all he needs." With this he bowed to Wilhelm, and the priest took Wilhelm by the hand, who readily followed him.

Silently they walked along strange looking passageways and finally arrived in a very pleasant room. The priest ushered him in, and left without further explanation. Soon after this a bright young boy appeared, announced that he was to wait on Wilhelm, and brought him his supper; and while he was serving this he told him a good deal about the arrangements of the household, how one took breakfast and the other meals, the division between work and recreation, and much else that redounded to the praise of Lothario.

Pleasant as the boy was, Wilhelm was anxious to get rid of him. He wanted to be alone, for he felt stifled and oppressed by his present situation; he reproached himself for having carried out his intentions so inefficiently and only delivering half his message. One moment he was determined to communicate the rest on the very next day, but then he realized that Lothario had aroused quite unexpected feelings in him. The house in which he found himself was so very strange, that he could not adapt himself to these conditions. He decided to undress, opened his rucksack and, taking out his nightclothes, found the Ghost's veil, which Mignon had packed along with the other things. The sight of this aggravated the melancholy of the mood he was in. "Flee, young man, flee!" He repeated the words to himself, then thought: "What are these mysterious words supposed to mean? What should I flee? Where to? It would have been better if the Ghost had said: 'Return to yourself!'" He looked at the engravings on the wall, finding them mostly not worthy of his attention; but one of them depicted a shipwreck with a father and two beautiful daughters

awaiting death from the encroaching waves. One of the daughters bore a certain resemblance to the Amazon. Wilhelm was overwhelmed by a sense of pity, he felt an irrepressible need to open up his heart, tears burst from his eyes, and he could not contain himself until sleep overcame him.

Strange dream visions overcame him toward morning. He found himself in a garden where he had often been as a child, and joyfully recognized the familiar hedgerows; walks, and flowerbeds. Mariane came up to him, he spoke tenderly to her, without any reference to the past disturbance of their relationship. Then his father appeared, in his housecoat, and, with more than customary friendliness, asked his son to bring up two garden chairs, took Mariane's hand and led her to an arbor. Wilhelm went to the conservatory to fetch the chairs, but found it empty. He did, however, see Aurelie standing at a nearby window. He went up to speak to her, but her back was turned, and although he went and stood next to her, he could not see her face. He looked out of the window, and, in another garden, he saw a group of people, some of whom he immediately recognized: Madame Melina was sitting beneath a tree, toying with a rose that she held in her hand, Laertes stood beside her counting out money from one hand into the other. Mignon and Felix were lying in the grass, she stretched out on her back, he lying face downward. Philine came up and clapped her hands above the children's heads. Mignon did not move, but Felix jumped up and ran away from Philine. At first he was laughing as he ran and Philine chased him, but suddenly he cried out in fear as the Harper pursued him with long, slow strides. He ran straight up to a pond, Wilhelm rushed after him, but too late to reach him before he had fallen into the water. Wilhelm stood rooted to the spot. Then he saw the beautiful Amazon on the other side of the pond. She stretched out her right hand toward the child and went to the bank. The child moved through the water in the direction of her extended finger, and followed her as she went, until she reached and pulled him out of the pond. Meanwhile, Wilhelm had drawn nearer, the child was burning all over, and drops of fire were falling off him. Wilhelm became more and more alarmed, but the Amazon quickly took a white veil from off her head and covered the child. The fire was soon quenched, and when she lifted up the veil, two boys jumped up and played mischievously with each other while Wilhelm and the Amazon walked hand in hand through the garden. He could see his father strolling with Mariane way off, in an allée with tall trees which seemed to encircle the whole garden. He directed his path in their direction, was walking right across the garden with his lovely companion, when suddenly the blond Friedrich stood in their path and blocked their progress, with raucous laughter and all sorts of foolery. Despite this, they insisted on continuing on their path, so he hurried away toward the other, more distant couple. But his father and Mariane seemed to be running away from him, he ran faster and faster after them, and they seemed to Wilhelm to be soaring through the trees in flight. Impulse and desire impelled him to go to their assistance, but

the Amazon's hand held him back — and how gladly he let himself be held! And so, with this mixed feeling, he woke up and found his room brightly lit by the morning sun.

Chapter Two

The boy summoned Wilhelm to breakfast. The Abbé was already there, and said he had heard that Lothario had gone out for a ride. The Abbé himself was pensive and not very talkative, but he did ask after the circumstances of Aurelie's death, and listened with interest and compassion to Wilhelm's account. "Alas!" he said, "for someone who is deeply concerned about how infinitely complicated the operations of nature and art must be to produce a cultured human being, and himself has done all he can to educate his fellowmen, it is enough to make one despair, when one sees how wantonly a person can destroy herself, or be destroyed with or without being responsible. When I reflect on that, then life seems to me such a casual gift that I would approve of anyone who does not value it too highly."

He had just finished speaking, when the door burst open and a young woman came rushing in, pushing aside the old manservant who had tried to stop her. She tore up to the Abbé and, grasping him by the arm, was hardly able to speak for weeping and sobbing, but did manage to blurt out: "Where is he? Where have you put him? This is outrageous treachery! Admit it! I know what you're up to! But I'm determined to get him, and I want to know where he is."

"Calm yourself, my child," said the Abbé, with affected composure. "Go to your room. You shall be told everything in due course. But you must be in a position to listen when I do tell you." He offered her his hand, intending to escort her out of the room. "I won't go to my room," she cried. "I hate these walls within which you have kept me a prisoner so long. But I've found out everything. The colonel has challenged him to a duel and he has ridden out to meet him, and perhaps at this very moment . . . Several times I thought I could hear the sound of shooting. Harness the horses, and ride out with me, or I'll fill the whole house and the whole village with my cries." Weeping bitterly, she rushed up to the window. The Abbé restrained her and tried to calm her.

A carriage was heard arriving. She opened the window and cried: "He's dead! They're bringing him back." "He's getting out of the carriage," said the Abbé. "He's alive, you see." "He's wounded," she replied anxiously, "otherwise he would have come on horseback. They're bringing him in. He is gravely wounded!" She ran out of the door and down the steps, the Abbé rushing after her and Wilhelm following behind. He saw the lovely girl greet the arrival of her lover.

Lothario, leaning on a companion whom Wilhelm recognized as his old acquaintance Jarno, spoke kindly and lovingly to the disconsolate girl; then, supporting himself on her, he walked slowly up the steps, greeted Wilhelm, and was then led to his room.

Soon after this Jarno came out and walked up to Wilhelm. "It seems," he said, "that you are predestined to encounter actors and theater everywhere you go. We are in the midst of a drama that is not precisely amusing."

"I am glad," replied Wilhelm, "to see you again in these peculiar circumstances. I am puzzled and frightened, and your presence will bring me calm and composure. Tell me, is there any danger? Is the baron seriously wounded?" "I don't think so," Jarno replied.

After a short while a young surgeon came out of the room. "Well, what do you think?" Jarno asked him. "It is very serious," he said, replacing his instruments in a leather case. Wilhelm noticed a ribbon hanging out of the case, which seemed familiar to him. Bright contrasting colors, a strange pattern of gold and silver in curious shapes, this distinguished the ribbon from all others he had ever seen. Wilhelm was convinced that these instruments were those of the old surgeon who had tended his wounds in the forest, and the hope of finally discovering some trace of the Amazon brought new life to his whole being.

"Where did you get that case?" he cried. "Who owned it before you? Please tell me." "I bought it at an auction," the man said. "What does it matter to whom it belonged?" He moved away as he spoke, and Jarno said: "If only that young fellow would speak the truth!" "Then he didn't buy the case at an auction?" said Wilhelm. "Right!" said Jarno. "That's as far from the truth as Lothario's being in danger."

Wilhelm was still immersed in a host of thoughts, when Jarno asked him how things had been going with him. He told him in general terms, and when he got to Aurelie's death and the message he was bearing, Jarno exclaimed: "But that is very strange!"

The Abbé emerged from the room, signalled to Jarno to take his place, and then said to Wilhelm: "The baron requests that you stay here for a few days more to enrich the company and enliven him in his present circumstances. If you need to send any message to your relatives, your letter will be immediately dispatched, and so that you may understand the strange occurrence which you have been witness to, I have to tell you something that is not really a secret. The baron has had a little adventure with a lady, which has attracted more attention than it should have, because she was too eager to relish the triumph of having snatched him from a rival. Unfortunately, after some time he did not find her as amusing as he had, and he avoided her, but she with her passionate temperament was not able to reconcile herself to what had happened. There was a violent and public disagreement at a ball, she considered herself gravely insulted and wanted revenge, but no knight was there to defend her, until her husband, from whom she had long been separated, heard about the affair, took

her part, challenged the baron to a duel, and has wounded him today. But the colonel, as I have heard, fared even worse.”

From this time on our hero was treated like a member of the family.

Chapter Three

The invalid was read to several times, and Wilhelm was happy to do him this small service. The young woman, whose name was Lydie, would not leave his bedside, her care of the wounded man engaging all her attention. Lothario seemed distracted too and asked not to be read to any longer.

“Today,” he said, “I feel so strongly how stupidly people let time pass. There are so many things I have been intending to do, so many plans I have thought about, and yet one procrastinates, even regarding one’s very best intentions! I have read the proposals for the changes I wish to introduce on my estates, and I can truly say that I am glad that the bullet did not take a more dangerous route.”

Lydie looked at him affectionately, even with tears in her eyes, as if she wanted to know whether she and his friends could not assist in increasing his pleasure in living. But Jarno answered: “Changes such as you have in mind are best first considered from every angle before one makes a decision.”

“Lengthy consideration usually indicates that one has not clearly visualized the point at issue, and hasty actions that one does not even know what it is,” said Lothario. “It is quite apparent to me that, in many matters concerning the management of my estates, I cannot do without the services of my farmhands, and also that I must rigidly insist on certain rights; but it is also clear to me that certain dispositions, though advantageous to me, are not absolutely essential, and some of them could be changed for the benefit of my workers. One doesn’t always lose by giving up something. Am I making better use of my estates than my father? Will I be able to increase my revenues? And should I alone derive all the extra profit from this? Should I not grant advantages to those who work with me and for me, from the greater knowledge that our progressive era has provided us with?”

“That’s how we human beings are!” said Jarno, “and I do not reproach myself for observing the same characteristic in myself. We want to acquire all we can, in order to be able to dispose of it as we wish, and money that we do not expend ourselves, always seems ill spent.”

“Yes, indeed,” replied Lothario. “We could do without much of our capital, if we did not so arbitrarily dispose of the interest.”

“There is one thing I have to remind you of,” said Jarno, “and that is why I would advise you not to proceed with the alterations right now. These would result in temporary losses. You still have debts, and repaying these will restrict you. I would therefore advise you to postpone your plans until you are completely in the clear.”

"And meanwhile leave it to a bullet or a rooftile to destroy the results of my life and activity for ever? My dear fellow, that is one of the major mistakes of all educated persons: they refer everything to an idea, very rarely to a specific object. Why did I run up debts? Why did I break with my uncle and leave my siblings to look after themselves, except to follow an idea? In America I thought I could achieve something, I felt I was needed overseas, and could be useful there—if action was not accompanied by danger, it seemed to me unimportant, not worth doing. But now I see things differently: What is nearest at hand, seems to me now most important and most desirable."

"I well remember the letter you sent me from overseas," said Jarno. "You wrote: 'I will return, and in my own house, my own orchard, in the midst of my own people, I will say: *Here, or nowhere, is America!*'"

"Yes, my friend, and I still say the same," Lothario responded. "But at the same time I reproach myself for not being as active here as I was over there. To achieve some sort of steady existence, all we need is reasonableness, and we become the embodiment of reasonableness and nothing else, when we do not perceive the abnormal demands that every normal day exacts from us, or even if we do, we make a thousand excuses not to meet these demands. Reasonableness is fine for one's self, but not of much value for the community."

"Let's not discredit reasonableness too much, for we should recognize that when something extraordinary occurs, it is usually foolish."

"Yes, but that is because men do extraordinary things without respecting orderliness. Take, for instance, my brother-in-law, who has given all the money he could realize to the Herrnhut brethren, in the belief of thereby furthering his salvation. By disposing of just a small part of his income, he could have made many people happy and secured for himself and them a heaven on earth. Our sacrifices rarely represent a personal impulse, for by renouncing what is ours and giving it to others, we are acting out of despair, not from conscious determination: all we are doing is relieving ourselves of the weight of our possessions. I must confess that, during these last few days, I have constantly had the count in my mind, and I have firmly decided to do out of conviction what he is doing from fear and delusion. I shall not wait until I am well again. The papers are here, all we need is fair copies. Let the magistrate help you. Our guest will help you too. You know as well as I do what the issue is; and I will lie here, recovering or dying, and proclaim: *Here, or nowhere, is Herrnhut!*"

When Lydie heard her friend mention dying, she flung herself down beside his bed, hung over him, and wept bitterly. The surgeon came back; Jarno gave Wilhelm the papers, and persuaded Lydie to leave.

"For Heaven's sake," said Wilhelm when he and Jarno were alone in the hall, "what is all this about the count? What count is it who is joining Herrnhut?"

"The one you know full well," Jarno replied. "You yourself are the ghost that drove him into the arms of religion. You are the villain who reduced his nice wife to a state where she finds it tolerable to follow her husband."

"Is she then Lothario's sister?" Wilhelm asked.

"Yes, she is."

"And does Lothario know . . . ?"

"Everything."

"Let me get out of here!" Wilhelm cried; "how can I possibly face him? What can he possibly say?"

"That no one should cast stones and no one should compose long speeches to put others to shame, unless he delivers them before a mirror."

"You know that too?"

"And a good deal more," said Jarno with a smile. "But this time I won't let go of you so easily, and you need have no more fear of my trying to make you enlist. I'm not a soldier anymore, and even when I was, I should not have aroused such suspicions in you. Since I last saw you, a lot has changed. After the death of my friend and benefactor, the prince, I withdrew from society and all worldly relationships. I took pleasure in furthering what was reasonable, and did not keep silent when I thought something was absurd. As a result I gained the reputation of having a restless mind and a malicious tongue. There is nothing more feared by the general mass of human beings than shrewdness; they should fear stupidity, if only they knew how fearful that is. But shrewdness is uncomfortable and to be avoided, whereas stupidity is simply destructive, and one can wait out its results. But let that pass. I have what it takes, and I'll tell you more about what I am planning. You shall participate in this, if you wish. But tell me, how have things been with you? I can see; indeed I can sense that you too have changed. How is it now with that old fancy of yours of achieving something good and beautiful in the company of gypsies?"

"I've suffered enough for that!" Wilhelm exclaimed. "Don't remind me where I came from and where I am tending. People talk a lot about the theater, but unless one has been on the stage oneself, one cannot conceive what it is like. How ignorant actors are of themselves, how utterly thoughtless they are in the conduct of their work, how exorbitant their demands are—no one has any idea. Every one of them wants to be first and foremost and exclude all the others. None of them understands that by this means he and the others cannot hope to achieve much. They all think they are absolutely unique, but in fact they are totally unable to do anything that is not mere routine, though they are always restless and clamoring for something new. They work strenuously against each other, and yet a modicum of self-interest and self-love would suffice to bring them together again. One cannot speak of any mutual behavior toward each other, for constant mistrust is kept up by hidden malice and slanderous talk. Those who don't live a loose life, live foolishly. They all make claim to the utmost respect and are sensitive to the slightest blame. The one knew better than the other what was right: why then did he do the opposite? They are always lacking something, have no confidence in anyone or anything, and it seems as though what they most retreat from is reasonableness and good taste, and what they most strive after is the unlimited exercise of their own arbitrary desires."

Wilhelm paused before continuing his oration, and Jarno broke in with riotous laughter. "Those poor actors," he cried, throwing himself on to a chair, and still laughing, "those poor, dear actors! Don't you realize," he went on, once he had recovered, "don't you realize that you have been describing the whole world, not just the theater? I could provide you with characters and actions from all classes of society for your savage brushstrokes. Forgive me, but I must continue to laugh at your belief that these fine qualities are limited to the stage."

Wilhelm composed himself, for Jarno's uncontrolled, ill-timed laughter had quite disconcerted him. "You can't conceal your dislike of the human race if you assert that these faults are to be found everywhere." "And you," Jarno countered, "show your ignorance of the world if you place such heavy responsibility for them on the theater. I would gladly excuse an actor for any fault that arose from self-deception and a desire to please, for if he does not appear as something to himself and others, he is nothing at all. His job is to provide appearances, and he must needs set high store on instantaneous approval, for he gets none other. He must try to delude and dazzle, for that's what he's there for."

"Please allow me now to smile," Wilhelm replied. "I would never have thought that you could be so reasonable and considerate."

"In all seriousness, that is my opinion," said Jarno. "I can readily forgive an actor all the human failings, but not humans for an actor's failings. But don't let me start intoning my lamentations about that: my objections would be much more vehement than yours."

At this point the surgeon came out of Lothario's room and, on being asked how he was, he said: "Pretty well. I hope to have him fully recovered soon." He then rushed out without Wilhelm being able to ask him once more and this time more eagerly about the bag in which he carried his instruments. The desire to find out more about the Amazon gave Wilhelm more confidence in talking to Jarno, to whom he explained what he wanted to know and asked for his assistance. "You already know so much," he said to Jarno, "couldn't you find that out for me?"

Jarno thought for a moment and then said: "Be patient and don't trouble yourself any more. We'll get on her trail. But for the moment it is Lothario's situation that concerns me. His condition is serious—I gather that from the politeness and encouragement of the surgeon. I would like to get Lydie out of the way, for she is not doing any good, but I don't know how to set about that. Our old physician is coming tonight, I hope. Then we can discuss what next to do."

Chapter Four

The old physician arrived. He was the good little doctor we already know, the one who delivered to us that interesting manuscript. He came primarily to

examine Lothario, and he seemed not at all satisfied with his condition. He had a long talk with Jarno, but neither of them made any reference to this when they appeared at dinner.

Wilhelm welcomed him most cordially and inquired after the Harper. "We still have some hope," said the doctor, "of effecting a recovery for that poor, unhappy creature." "That man was a sorrowful addition to your strange and restricted existence," said Jarno. "What happened to him later? Do tell me."

After Jarno's curiosity had been satisfied, the doctor continued: "I have never witnessed a mind in such a peculiar state. For many years now he has not taken the slightest interest in anything outside of himself, even to the point of not noticing much at all. Completely shut up in himself, all he looked at was his own hollow and empty self, which was a bottomless pit for him. How touching it was when he spoke of his sorry state! 'I see nothing before me, and nothing behind me,' he would say, 'nothing but the endless night of loneliness in which I find myself. I have no feeling left, except that of my guilt, but even that is only a distant, shapeless ghost that lurks behind my back. There is no height or depth, no forwards or backwards, nothing to describe this continual sameness. Sometimes I cry out: "forever, forever!" in the face of this terrifying indifference, and that strange, meaningless word is a beacon of light in the darkness of my condition. No gleam of any godhead comes to me in this continual blackness, my tears are shed all for myself and because of myself. There is nothing more horrifying to me than friendship and love: for these evoke in me the wish that the phantoms surrounding me might be real. But even these two specters from the abyss have only risen to torment me and rob me finally of my own precious consciousness of my monstrous existence.'

"You should hear how he unburdens his heart like this in his moments of confidentiality," the doctor continued. "Several times I have been deeply moved in listening to him. When something happens that compels him for a moment to realize that time has passed, he seems astonished at this, but then rejects whatever change has occurred as simply one more phantom. One evening he sang a song about his grey hair; and we all sat there and wept."

"Oh, do get the song for me!" Wilhelm cried.

"But," said Jarno, "have you not been able to find out something about what he calls his 'crime,' the reasons for his strange garb, his behavior during the fire and his frenzied rage at the child?"

"We have only been able to make surmises about his life story: direct questioning would be against our principles. Since we have observed that he had a Catholic upbringing, we thought we might gain some relief for him by suggesting he go to confession. But every time we try to get him to go to a priest, he avoids this in the strangest manner. Since, however, I do not wish to leave your request for more information about him completely unanswered, I will tell you what we surmise. He spent his early years in the priesthood, which is why he still wears his long gown and will not shave his beard. The joys of love were foreign to him for most of his life, but later it may be that some episode with

a woman closely related to him, and possibly her death at the birth of some unfortunate creature, completely destroyed his mind.

"His strongest delusion is that he brings misfortune wherever he goes and that he will die at the hands of an innocent boy. At first he was afraid of Mignon, until he found out that she was a girl; then he became terrified of Felix, and since, despite all his misery, he passionately loves life, his dislike of the boy seems to have come from this delusion."

"What hope, then, do you have of his recovery?" Wilhelm asked.

"Things are developing slowly, but not backwards," the doctor replied. "He continues in his specific occupations, and we have accustomed him to reading newspapers, which he now looks forward to with great eagerness."

"I would be curious to see his songs," said Jarno.

"I will bring you some of them," said the doctor. "The pastor's eldest son, who always makes transcripts of his father's sermons, has written down several verses and put them together into songs without the old man noticing."

The next morning Jarno came to see Wilhelm and said: "You must do us a favor. Lydie must be removed from here for a while. Her violent and, I may say, inconvenient passion is impeding the baron's recovery. His wound is such that he needs peace and quiet, even though, with his good health, it is not dangerous. You have observed how Lydie torments him with her vigorous ministrations, uncontrollable anxiety and unceasing tears and—well, the doctor expressly demands that she leave the house for a while," he added with a smile. "We have pretended that a certain woman, with whom she is very friendly, is staying in the neighborhood, wants to see her, and is expecting her visit any day. Lydie has been persuaded to go the magistrate, who lives only two hours' drive from here. He is informed of the situation and will express his regrets that Miss Thérèse has just left. He will probably pretend that one might still be able to catch up with her, and Lydie will hurry off and, if luck is with us, she will be directed on from one place to another. When she finally insists on returning here, she should not be thwarted. Darkness will aid our purposes, and the coachman is a smart fellow with whom one can come to an agreement. What you have to do, is seat yourself beside her in the carriage, entertain her, and manage the whole adventure."

"You are giving me a strange and highly dubious assignment," Wilhelm replied. "Frustrated true love is a troublesome thing. And should I be the instrument to prolong its anguish? Never in my whole life have I deceived anyone in this way. For my view has always been that to engage in deceit, even for good or useful purposes, can lead us too far."

"But how can we educate children except by this means?" said Jarno.

"That may be all right with children," said Wilhelm, "if we love them dearly and watch over them carefully. But with people of our own age, especially when they do not always appeal so loudly for forbearance, it may often turn out to be dangerous. But," he continued after a moment's reflection, "don't conclude from this that I decline this obligation. The respect that I have for your

intelligence, my affection for your friend and my desire to hasten his recovery by whatever means, will encourage me to forget myself. It is not enough to risk one's life for a friend; one must, if needs be, disclaim one's convictions for his sake. We are obliged to abandon our deepest feelings and desires on his account. I will accept this commission, though I foresee the anguish I will have to suffer from Lydie's tears and desperation."

"On the other hand," said Jarno, "you will experience no small recompense by getting to know Therese, a woman with few like her. She would put a hundred men to shame, and I would call her a real Amazon, whereas others who go around like her in ambiguous clothing are nothing but dainty hermaphrodites."

Wilhelm was struck by this remark. He now hoped to find his Amazon in Therese, especially since Jarno, from whom he tried to find out more, broke off what he was saying, and hurried away.

This new, impending expectation of seeing once more the person he so much loved and adored, aroused within him the strangest perturbations. He now interpreted the assignment given him as an express indication of providential guidance, and the fact that he was perfidiously about to separate a poor girl from the object of her devoted, impassioned love became just a fleeting consideration, like the shadow of a bird passing over the brightness of the earth.

The carriage stood ready. Lydie hesitated for a moment before getting into it, and said to the old retainer: "Give my greetings once more to your master, and tell him I will be back before evening." There were tears in her eyes as she once again looked back while they were leaving. Then she composed herself, and turning to Wilhelm, she said: "You will find Therese a very interesting person. I am surprised that she is here in this area, for you must know that she and the baron were deeply in love with each other. Despite the distance, Lothario used to go to see her frequently. I was with her at the time, and it seemed that they could not live without each other. Then things suddenly went wrong, without anyone knowing why. Lothario had got to know me, and I cannot deny that I was really jealous of Therese, did not conceal my affection for him, and did not discourage him when he seemed suddenly to prefer me to her. She behaved toward me in a manner that I could not have wished better, despite the fact that it seemed almost as if I was robbing her of a worthy lover. This love of mine has cost me so many tears and so much suffering! At first we met only occasionally and furtively in some neutral place, but I could not put up with that sort of life for long: I was only happy, only truly happy, when I was with him. When I was separated from him, my eyes filled with tears and my pulse raced. Once he was absent for several days, and I was frantic, started out after him, and surprised him here. He received me affectionately, and if that wretched business had not intervened, I would have had a glorious life. But what I've suffered since he has been in danger, I cannot describe; and even at this very moment I am thoroughly reproachful of myself for having left him for just a day."

Wilhelm was about to ask her more about Therese when they arrived at the magistrate's house. The magistrate came out and expressed deep regret that Therese had already left. He offered the travelers some breakfast, and added that they should be able to catch up with her carriage in the next village. It was decided therefore to go straight on, and the coachman did not waste any time. But they passed through several villages without seeing a sign of her. Lydie then insisted they should turn back. But the coachman went on, as though he had not understood. Finally she demanded, this time with great firmness, that they must go back. Wilhelm called to the coachman, giving him the sign they had agreed on. He replied: "We don't need to take the same road back, I know a shortcut which will be much more convenient." He then drove off to the side through a forest over long tracts of meadowland. At length, since no familiar place came into view, he confessed that he had unfortunately lost his way, but said he would soon know where he was, once they reached the next village. Night began to fall, and the coachman managed things well by constantly asking directions but never waiting for the answers. So they rode the whole night long, and Lydie never closed an eyelid. She kept seeing familiar things in the moonlight, but they immediately disappeared. In the morning things seemed more familiar, and all the more unexpectedly so. The carriage stopped before a small, nicely built house. A woman came out and opened the carriage door. Lydie stared at her, looked around, stared at the woman again, then fell senseless in Wilhelm's arms.

Chapter Five

Wilhelm was shown into an upstairs room. The house was new, quite small, and extremely tidy and clean. It was Therese who had welcomed him and Lydie as they got out of the carriage, but she turned out not to be his Amazon: she was a totally different person. She was well built, though not tall, moved about very briskly, and her bright, blue eyes seemed to take in everything that was happening.

She came into Wilhelm's room and asked if there was anything he needed. "Forgive me for putting you in a room that still smells of paint," she said, "but my little house is only just finished, and you are inaugurating this room, which is intended for my guests. If only there were a more agreeable reason for your being here! Poor Lydie will not give us a very easy time, and in addition I must crave your indulgence because my cook has just left my service at this very inconvenient time, and one of my menservants has crushed his hand. This means that I shall have to do everything myself, but so long as you all accept this, it should be all right. There is no greater plague than servants. They never want to do what they are employed for, not even for themselves." She said a good deal more about other matters. She seemed altogether to enjoy talking. Wilhelm asked after Lydie, and whether he could see her and make his excuses.

"That won't have any effect on her at the moment," said Therese. "Time will make the excuses, and bring her consolation. Words are of little value in such cases. Lydie does not wish to see you. 'Don't let him come anywhere near me,' she was saying when I left her. 'I almost despair of humanity—such an honest face, such openness and sincerity of behavior but secretly so full of guile!' Lothario is totally exculpated: he said in a letter that it was his friends who persuaded him, forced him, to do this. And Lydie counts you amongst these 'friends,' and condemns you with the rest."

"She does me far too great an honor by placing the blame on me," said Wilhelm. "I cannot yet claim to enjoy the friendship of that excellent man: at the moment I am just an innocent tool. I don't approve of what I did, but still I was able to do it. We were all concerned about the health, even whether he would remain alive, of this man whom I respect more highly than anyone I have ever met. What a man he is, and what persons he has gathered around him! Believe me: In this company I have, for the first time, had a real conversation, and for the first time in my life I find my own words returned to me, enriched from the mouth of another—richer, fuller and endowed with greater import. What I had dimly sensed, suddenly became clear to me, and I learned how to see what I had thought. Unfortunately this pleasurable state was interrupted by concern and moodiness, and finally cut short by this disagreeable assignment. I took it upon myself in complete seriousness, for I thought it was my duty, even against my own feelings, to discharge my obligation to this admirable group of people."

Therese had been observing her guest in a sympathetic manner as he spoke. "Oh, how sweet it is," she declared, "to hear one's own convictions voiced by another. We only really become ourselves when someone else thoroughly agrees with us. I have exactly the same feeling about Lothario as you do. People do not always do him justice, but all those who are closely acquainted with him, are infatuated with him; and even in my case, where painful feelings are associated with his memory, I cannot resist thinking about him every day of my life." A deep sigh and a becoming tear accompanied her words. "Don't think I am so easily moved to softness!" she said. "It's only my eye that sheds the tear. There is a little wart on the lower lid, it has been treated, but the eye is somewhat weakened by this, and tears appear at the slightest provocation. This is where the wart was. You can't see any trace of it now."

Indeed he could not; but he did look straight into her eye which was clear as crystal. He felt he was looking into the very depths of her soul.

"Well," she said, "we've both found the password for a relationship. Let's deepen it as soon as possible. The history of every human being lies in his character. Let me tell you my life story; and please grant me the same favor, so that we may remain in contact with each other even when we are apart. The world is so empty if we think of it just as a collection of mountains, rivers and cities; but to find someone somewhere who sees eye to eye with us, someone with whom we can continue to commune in silence, makes the whole world into a populated garden."

She tore herself away, promising to fetch him soon for a walk. Her presence had affected Wilhelm very favorably, and he longed to know more about her relationship with Lothario. Eventually he received a summons from her, and she came out of her room to meet him.

They went down the steep, narrow steps, and then she said: "These steps could be wider and bigger if I had listened to your generous friend's proposal, but to remain worthy of him I had to preserve that part of myself which he so valued in me. Where is the steward?" she asked, when she had reached the bottom of the steps. "You must not think I am so rich that I need a steward. I can myself well look after the few fields that my little estate contains. The steward belongs to my new neighbor who has bought a fine estate, which I know inside out. The dear old man is afflicted with gout, and all his helpers are new to this area. So I am happy to help them get things organized."

They took a walk through fields, pastures and orchards. Therese instructed the steward on everything, explaining every detail, and Wilhelm had good cause to marvel at her knowledge, precision, and ability to suggest ways of dealing with every problem that came up. She never wasted time in getting to the essential point, and each problem was soon settled. "Give your master my best wishes," she said, as the man was leaving. "I will come and see him as soon as I can, and I hope he will soon be fully recovered." When the steward had left, she turned to Wilhelm with a smile, and said: "As a matter of fact, I could get rich quickly, if I so desired; for my dear neighbor would not be disinclined to marry me."

"An old man with gout?" said Wilhelm. "I cannot imagine how you at your age could embrace such a counsel of despair?" "I am not tempted in that direction!" Therese replied. "One is rich if one knows how to manage what one has. Being wealthy is a burdensome affair, if one does not understand what it entails."

Wilhelm expressed his amazement at her managerial abilities. "Definite inclination, early opportunities, external impetus and continuous occupation in useful pursuits make all sorts of things possible in this world of ours," said Therese, "and once you have learnt what instigated me in these matters, you will not be so surprised at this seemingly unusual talent of mine."

When they returned to the house, she let him into her garden, which was so tiny that he could hardly turn around in it, so narrow were the walks and so thickly planted the beds. He had to smile when they walked back through the courtyard, for there was the firewood all neatly cut, split and stacked crosswise, as if it were part of the building. All the receptacles were clean and in place, the little house was painted red and white and amusing to look at. Everything that handiwork could produce, all with good proportions but made to serve the purpose, to last and to delight, seemed to be assembled here. His dinner was brought to his room, and he had ample time to collect his impressions. He was especially struck by the fact that here, once again, he had met a very interesting person who was closely associated with Lothario. "It is

understandable," he said to himself, "that a man of the quality of Lothario should attract such admirable women! Manly dignity has far-reaching effects! It's a pity, however, that there are those who get short shrift in the process. Go ahead, say what it is that you are afraid of: should you one day discover your Amazon, that being above all beings, she will, despite all your hopes and dreams, probably turn out, to your shame and humiliation, to be — his bride."

Chapter Six

Wilhelm had been spending a restless afternoon, and was somewhat bored, when, toward evening, his door was opened and in came a comely young huntsman who saluted and said: "Well, shall we go for a walk?" Wilhelm instantly recognized Therese by her lovely eyes.

"Excuse this costume, which, unfortunately, is at the moment only a costume. But since I intend to tell you about the days when I preferred to see myself in this garb, I want to recall that time as visibly as I possibly can. Come along! Let's go to the place where we used to rest from all our hunting and walks, and that will add to the picture."

They walked off, and, as they went, Therese said: "It's not right that you should just let me talk. You know enough about me already, but I know nothing about you. Tell me something about yourself, while I am gathering strength to tell you about my life and my situation." "Unfortunately," said Wilhelm, "I have nothing to relate except one mistake after another, one false step after the other, and I cannot think of anybody I would rather not tell about the constant confusion I was and still am in, than you. Your appearance, your whole nature, and everything around you, show that you have reason to be satisfied with the life you have led, its clear and steady progress, with no time wasted, and no regrets to labor over."

Therese smiled, and said: "We must wait and see if you still think the same when you have heard my story." They walked on, and after some general remarks had passed between them, she asked him: "Are you unattached?" "I believe so," said Wilhelm, "but I wish I wasn't." "Fine!" she said. "That suggests a complicated romance, and shows me that you do have something to relate."

During this exchange they climbed up to the top of the hill and sat down beneath a large oak tree that cast its shade all around. "Here beneath this German tree," said Therese, "I will tell you the tale of a German maiden. Listen carefully.

"My father was a wealthy nobleman of this province, a clear-sighted, industrious, upright man, loving father, reliable friend, and generous host, whose only fault in my eyes was that he was too easy on his wife, who did not properly appreciate him. I regret having to say that about my own mother. Her personality was the very opposite of his. She was impulsive, erratic, with no

concern for her household nor love for me, her only child. She was extravagant, but beautiful, witty, full of all sorts of talents, the delight of the circle she gathered around herself. Her circle was certainly never large, or did not remain so for long, and it consisted mainly of men, for no woman felt comfortable in her presence, and she could not tolerate merit in any others of her sex. I resembled my father in appearance and personality. Just as a duckling soon finds water, so my element from my earliest years was the kitchen, the store room, barns and attics. Even during my years of play, my natural instinct and my sole concern were to preserve order and cleanliness in the house. My father was delighted at this and gradually provided my childish desires with appropriate opportunities for fulfillment. But my mother did not love me, and never concealed this fact for a moment.

"I grew up, my activities increased, and with them my father's love for me. When we were alone together, when we walked across the fields or when I helped him check his accounts, I could feel how happy he was. When I looked into his eyes, it was as though I was peering into my own self. For it was in the eyes that I resembled him most. But his spirits flagged and his expression changed when he was with my mother. He made gentle excuses for me when she attacked me savagely and unjustly. He took my part, not in order to protect me, but because my good qualities merited that I be excused. He never opposed any of her wishes. She developed a great passion for acting, a theater was built, and there was no lack of men of all shapes and ages, to appear on stage alongside her, but few women. Lydie, a nice girl who had been educated with me and from early on had shown every prospect of becoming quite charming, took over the supporting female roles, an old chambermaid played aunts and mothers, whereas the female leads, both heroic and pastoral, were always reserved for my mother. I cannot tell you how ridiculous it seemed to me that people I knew very well dressed up and stood on the stage, demanding to be taken for something other than what they really were. What I saw, was always just my mother, Lydie, and this or that baron or secretary, whether they presented themselves as princes, counts, or peasants, and I did not understand how they could presume I would believe they were sick or well, in love or not, miserly or generous, when I usually knew they were the very opposite. So I was not often to be found amongst the spectators. I trimmed the lights, in order to have something to do, got their suppers, and next morning while they were still asleep, I would create some order in their costumes, which they had usually flung down all over the place the previous evening.

"My mother seemed to approve of what I did, but I never gained her love. In fact she despised me, and I remember very well that more than once she said bitterly: 'If mothers could be as unsure as fathers, one would never take this scullion for my daughter.' I will not deny that her behavior gradually set me apart from her completely, her actions seemed like those of a stranger to me, and since I was accustomed to watch servants like a hawk (for, between you and me, that is the basis of all good housekeeping), I became struck by the

relationships between my mother and the members of her entourage. It was easy to observe that she did not look on all these men with the same eyes. I watched more carefully, and soon noticed that Lydie was her confidante and was becoming steadily more acquainted with emotions she had been imagining to herself since her early years. I knew about all my mother's rendezvous, but I kept quiet, not telling my father anything that might distress him. Finally I had to, for there were certain things she could not engage in without bribing the servants, who began to defy me, ignoring my father's instructions and my own commands. The complete disorder that ensued as a result was unbearable to me, and I complained to my father, telling him everything.

"He listened to me quietly, and finally said, smiling: 'My dear child, I know all about that. Keep calm, and be patient; it is only for your sake that I put up with this.'

"But I wasn't calm, and I wasn't patient. I reproved my father in my own heart, for I did not think he needed to put up with so much, for whatever reason. I insisted on maintaining order, and was determined to bring matters to a climax.

"My mother had wealth in her own right, but she spent more than she should, and that, as I could see, led to altercations between my parents. Nothing happened to change matters until my mother's emotions led to a certain development.

"Her first lover became ostentatiously unfaithful—and our house, the neighborhood, and all the circumstances of her life became distasteful to her. She wanted to move to another estate, but then that would be too isolated for her. So she wanted to go to town, but there she would not cut a sufficient figure. I don't know what passed between her and my father. All I know is that he finally agreed, under conditions which I never ascertained, that she should take the trip to the south of France that she desired.

"He and I were now free and lived in seventh heaven. I really believe that my father suffered no loss by the considerable sum that he paid out to be rid of her presence. All the servants we no longer needed were dismissed, and fortune smiled on the order we established. We enjoyed several good years, with everything going according to our wishes. But unfortunately this happy state of affairs did not last long. My father quite unexpectedly suffered a stroke, which paralyzed his right side and deprived him of the power of clear speech. You had to guess at what he was asking for, for he never produced the word he had in his mind. I suffered many anxious moments when he insisted on being alone with me, and, after having sharply dismissed with a gesture all the others, was not able to produce the word he wanted. He would grow extremely impatient, and his condition caused me great unhappiness. I was quite sure that he was trying to communicate something of special concern to me, and I greatly desired to know what it was. Normally I could tell everything from his eyes, but now his eyes no longer spoke to me. One thing was clear: he did not want or require anything except to tell me something which, alas, I never

found out. A second stroke followed, and he became totally inactive and incapacitated. And very soon he was dead.

"I don't know how I got the idea that somewhere he had deposited money that, on his death, he wanted to come to me rather than to my mother. I searched for it while he was still alive, but without success. Then after his death everything was sealed. I wrote to my mother and offered to remain at the house to be in charge of things, but she rejected this and I had to leave. A reciprocal will came to light according to which she acquired ownership and use of everything, and I at least for the term of her life, remained her dependent. It was now that I believed I could understand the hints my father was giving me. I regretted that he had been such a weak character and so unjust to me after his death. Some of my friends even said that it would have almost been better if he had disinherited me, and urged me to contest the will, but I could not bring myself to do that. I revered my father's memory too much and put my trust in fate, and in myself.

"There was a lady in the neighborhood who owned large estates, with whom I had always been on good terms. She was pleased to take me into her household, and I was soon to become the head of it. She lived a regular life, and liked to have order in everything, and I gave her valiant help in her battles with stewards and retainers. I am not miserly, nor am I spiteful, but we women are more seriously concerned than any man to see that nothing is wasted. All fraudulent action arouses our displeasure; we want people to have only what they deserve.

"I was now once again in my element, lamenting in my quieter moments the loss of my father. My patroness was satisfied with me, and there was only one small thing that disrupted the peace of my existence. Lydie came back; my mother had been cruel enough to reject the poor girl now that she was thoroughly corrupted. She had learnt from my mother to consider passion as a way of life, and had accustomed herself never to display moderation in anything. When she unexpectedly reappeared, my benefactress took her in too. Lydie was eager to assist me, but she was of no use at anything.

"About this time my lady's relatives, and future heirs, would frequently come to the house and occupy themselves by arranging hunts. Lothario was sometimes among them, and I decided in no time that he was far superior to the rest, though he did not pay any particular attention to me. He was polite to everybody, but it soon became clear that it was Lydie he was attracted to. I always had plenty to do and was therefore socially rarely much in evidence. Lively conversation has always been the spice of life for me, but I must confess that in Lothario's presence I said less than usual. I had enjoyed taking with my father about everything that came up. If you don't talk about things, you don't really think about them adequately. There was no one I enjoyed listening to more than Lothario, when he was telling about his journeys and his military campaigns. The whole world lay as open and clear before him as

the small sphere of my own activity. What I heard from him was not outlandish adventures, exaggerated half-truths of a traveler with limited perceptions always putting himself ahead of the country he was describing. He didn't tell us about places, he took us there. I have rarely experienced such unadulterated pleasure.

"One evening I had the inexpressible satisfaction of hearing him talk about women. The topic came up quite naturally. Several ladies from the surrounding area were visiting us and were saying all the usual things about the education of women. Our sex was treated unfairly, they were saying: Men want to restrict all higher culture to themselves, we are not allowed to study, we are only to be playthings or housekeepers. Lothario said little to all this, but when the company had diminished in size, he did speak his mind openly. 'It is strange,' he said, 'that a man is thought ill of for wishing to place a woman in the highest position she is capable of occupying; and what is that but governing a household? Whereas the man labors away at external matters, acquiring possessions and protecting them, even maybe participating in the government of a state, he is always dependent on circumstances, and, I may say, controls nothing that he thinks he is controlling. He always has to be politic when he wants to be reasonable, covert when he wants to be open, deceitful when he wants to be honest, and for the sake of some goal that he never attains, he must every moment abandon that highest of all goals: harmony within himself. But the sensible housewife really governs, rules over all that is in the home and makes possible every kind of satisfying activity for the whole family. What is the greatest joy of mankind but pursuing what we perceive to be good and right, really mastering the means to our ends? And where should these ends be if not inside the home? Where should we expect to encounter the constantly recurring, indispensable needs, except where we get up in the morning and lay ourselves to rest at night, where kitchen and wine cellar and storerooms are always there for us and our families? And what a round of regular activity is required to maintain this constantly recurring order of things in undisturbed, never failing sequence! How few men are able to reappear like a star, regularly presiding over the day as well as the night, making household implements, sowing and reaping, preserving and expending, and treading the circle with calm, love and efficiency! Once a woman has assumed this internal governance, she makes thereby the man she loves into the sole master. Her attentiveness acquires all skills, and her activity uses them all. She is dependent on nobody and assures for her husband true independence—domestic independence, inner independence. What he owns, he now sees secured; what he acquires, he sees well used, and then he can turn his mind to bigger things, and if fortune favors him, be to the state what his wife is so admirably at home.'

"He followed this up with a description of the wife he desired. I blushed, for what he described was myself, just as I was. I secretly revelled in my triumph, and all the more so because everything indicated that it was not me he was

referring to, for he did not really know me. I cannot remember a more pleasing experience in my whole life than to see a man I respected giving preference to my character over my appearance. I felt rewarded, and encouraged.

“When the others had left, the lady who had become my friend said with a smile: ‘What a pity that men do so much thinking and talking about things they never put into practice, otherwise an excellent match for my dear Therese would have been just discovered.’ I laughed at her statement, adding that men’s minds look around for housekeepers, but their hearts and their imagination long for other qualities; and we housekeepers can’t compete with charming young girls. I said this so that Lydie should hear it; for she made no secret of the big impression that Lothario had made on her, and he for his part seemed to pay more and more attention to her every time he visited us. She was poor, not a person of quality, and could not contemplate marriage to him; but she could not withstand the delights of being charming and being charmed. I had never been in love, and was not then, but although it pleased me greatly to see how my character was rated by a man I so highly respected, I cannot deny that I was not entirely satisfied. I wanted him to get to know me and take a personal interest in me. I had no thought of what this might lead to.

“The greatest service I could perform for my benefactress was to bring some order into the beautiful woodlands on her estates. These valuable tracts of land, which were increasing steadily in value owing to various circumstances and the passage of time, were being treated without any imagination, plan or order, and there was no end of stealing and trickery. Whole hillsides were bare, and only the oldest stands of trees had equal size of growth. I went through every such area with an experienced forester, had measurements made, trees cut down, others started, and soon everything was progressing favorably. So as not to be encumbered, whether on foot or on horseback, I had men’s clothes made for me. I moved around a lot, and everyone was scared of me.

“I heard that the company of young people, including Lothario, were organizing another hunt, and for the first time in my life I decided to appear in my true colors, or perhaps I had better say, as I wanted to appear in Lothario’s eyes. I put on my men’s clothes, slung my gun over my back, and went out accompanied by our own huntsman, to await the others at the edge of the estate. They arrived, but Lothario did not recognize me right away. One of my lady’s nephews introduced me to him as an accomplished forester, joked about my youthfulness, and continued the game, praising me all the while, until Lothario finally recognized me. This nephew backed me up in all this, as though we had planned it ahead. He described at length and with gratitude all that I was doing for his aunt’s estates, and consequently also for him.

“Lothario listened attentively, then inquired about all sorts of things connected with the estates and the neighborhood, and I was glad to be able to display my knowledge. I passed my examination with flying colors, then asked his opinion about various improvements, which he approved, mentioning

similar cases, and strengthened my arguments by giving them an appropriate context. My satisfaction steadily increased. But fortunately I only wanted to be understood, not to be loved, for when we returned to the house I noticed more clearly than ever that his attentions to Lydie indicated a growing affection. I had achieved my aim, but I was not at ease. From that day on he displayed real respect and close confidence in me, began to talk to me when others were present, asked me for my opinion and seemed to trust my views on household matters as though I knew everything. His interest encouraged me greatly, and even when the talk was about agricultural or financial matters, he drew me into the conversation, and when he was not present I did all I could to acquire more knowledge of the area, even of the whole district. This was not difficult for me, because it represented on a bigger scale what I already knew in a smaller sphere.

“He began to visit us more frequently from then on. The conversation turned on a variety of subjects, but ultimately it always came down to questions of economics in the broader sense, and there was much talk of the vast results that can be achieved by efficient use of time, money and ability, even by means that may seem quite small in themselves.

“I did not resist the affection that was drawing me toward him, and unfortunately I soon became aware how strong, how sincere and pure my love for him was, when I observed ever more clearly that his repeated visits were in order to see Lydie, not me. At least that was her passionate conviction. She confided in me, and that was consoling to some extent. What she interpreted in her own favor, seemed to me of little significance. There was no sign of any intention of a lasting union, but I could easily see the emotional girl’s craving to belong to him at any price.

“That’s how matters stood when my lady surprised me one day with an unexpected communication. ‘Lothario,’ she said, ‘offers you his hand in marriage; he wants to have you at his side for his whole life.’ She then described at length my qualities, and told me something that I was very glad to hear: that Lothario was quite sure he had found in me the person he was looking for.

“I had now achieved my greatest joy: a man wanted me, whom I greatly respected, and at his side, and in his company I could envision the free and full expansion of my natural inclinations and practiced talents for the benefit of many people: my whole existence seemed at once to be extended into infinity. I gave my consent. He came and talked to me, gave me his hand, looked in my eyes, embraced me, and pressed a kiss on my lips—the first, and the last, he ever gave me. He confided to me his whole situation, told me what his American campaign had cost him, the debts he had incurred on his estates, the friction this had caused with his great-uncle, and the latter’s way of caring for him, namely to find a rich wife for him, since an intelligent man needs someone to take over the domestic side of his affairs. Lothario hoped through his sister to persuade the old man to agree to his union with me. He outlined his financial

resources, his plans and prospects and solicited my cooperation. But until his uncle gave his agreement, everything should remain secret.

"Just after he left, Lydie asked me whether he had said anything about her. I said that he hadn't, and bored her with an account of some economic matters. She was restless, ill-humored, and Lothario's behavior when he returned, did nothing to improve her state of mind.

"But I see that the sun is going down, my friend. That's fortunate for you, for otherwise you would have had to listen to my whole story, which I enjoy recounting to myself, in every detail. So let me speed things up! We are now reaching a period that it is not good to dwell on.

"Lothario introduced me to his wonderful sister who, in turn, introduced me to his uncle. I won the old man over, he agreed to what we wanted, and I returned to my lady with the joyful news. The whole matter was no longer a secret in the household. Lydie found out about it, and couldn't believe what she heard. When finally she could doubt it no longer, she immediately disappeared from sight, and nobody knew where she had taken herself off to.

"The wedding day was approaching. I had asked him several times for a picture and reminded him of his promise one day when he was about to leave. 'You have forgotten to give me the frame you wanted to have it mounted in,' he said. He was referring to the fact that I had received from a woman friend a gift that I greatly prized. The outer glass covering had a monogram fastened by strands of her hair, and inside there was a piece of ivory on which her portrait was to have been painted—but to my great sorrow she died. Lothario's affection brought me joy while her loss was giving me pain, and so I wanted to fill the gap left in her gift to me by the portrait of my friend.

"I went quickly to my room, fetched my jewel case, and opened it in his presence. Inside he saw a medallion with a woman's picture on it. He took it into his hands, examined it carefully, and quickly asked: 'Who is this a picture of?' 'My mother,' I replied. 'I could have sworn that this was a certain Mme. de Saint Alban whom I met several years ago in Switzerland,' he said. 'That's who it is,' I replied with a smile. 'So you met your mother-in-law without knowing it. Saint Alban is the romantic name that my mother uses when she's travelling: she's still using it, in France.' 'I am the most unfortunate of men!' he cried, putting the medallion back in the jewel case. He covered his eyes, left the room immediately, and threw himself into the saddle. I called after him from the terrace. He looked around, waved, then rushed away—and I have never seen him since."

The sun went down, and Therese gazed straight at the evening glow, her eyes brimming with tears. Silently she laid her hand on that of her new friend. He kissed it lovingly, she dried her tears, and stood up. "Let's go back," she said, "and pay some attention to the others."

Their conversation as they walked back was not animated. They arrived at the garden gate and saw Lydie sitting on a bench. She got up, but avoided them, and went back into the house. She was holding a paper in her hands, and

there were two little girls with her. "I see," said Therese, "that she still keeps with her what is her only consolation—Lothario's letter, in which he assures her that, as soon as he is better, she shall return to him, but for the time being she should stay quietly with me. She hangs on his words and consoles herself with them, but she has a poor opinion of his friends."

The two children came up, welcomed Therese, and gave her an account of all that had happened while she was out. "Here you see another branch of my activity," she said. "I have entered into an arrangement with Lothario's sister. Together we are educating a group of children—I take care of the vigorous, eager, domestic types and she takes charge of those who reveal quieter and more refined talents. For it is reasonable to provide in every way possible for the happiness of menfolk and the smooth running of the household. When you have met my good friend, his sister, your life will be different: her beauty and her goodness make her the object of everyone's adoration." Wilhelm did not venture to tell her that unfortunately he had already met the countess and his fleeting acquaintance with her would always remain painful for him. He was very glad that Therese did not continue this particular conversation, her household duties requiring her immediate attention. When she had left, he was overcome by a sense of distress at this last piece of news regarding the countess: that she was obliged to substitute for her own happiness the hope of providing happiness for others. He admired Therese for not feeling any need to change her way of life despite the unexpected sad change in her expectations. "How happy those are," he said to himself, "who do not have to reject the whole of their past life in order to accommodate themselves to fate!"

Therese came to his room, and asked to be forgiven for disturbing him. "Here in that wall cabinet is my whole library," she said. "It consists of books that I don't throw away, rather than those I wish to keep. When Lydie wants a religious book, she'll be able to find something of the kind. People who are worldly most of the time, get the idea they must be religious when they're in trouble. Things that are good and moral are like medicine they force down when they feel bad, and any priest or moral teacher is regarded as a physician one dispenses with as soon as possible. I must however confess that morality for me is a kind of diet, but only becomes a diet if practiced as a rule of life the whole year through."

She rummaged amongst the books and found a few so-called devotional works. "Recourse to such books is something that Lydie learnt from my mother," said Therese. "My mother lived on novels and plays so long as her lover remained faithful. But when he left, these other books came into their own. I simply cannot understand how anyone could believe that God speaks to us through books. If the world itself does not reveal to someone its relationship to him, if his heart does not tell him what his duties are, he is unlikely to learn that from books which provide us with little more than names for our mistakes."

She left Wilhelm to himself, and he spent the evening examining this little collection of books. It did seem to have been quite arbitrarily assembled.

Therese remained just the same for the few days that Wilhelm stayed with her. She told him in great detail, and at various intervals, about the results of what she had already related. Dates and places were all vividly present in her mind, and we will summarize that part which our readers need to know.

Unfortunately, the reason for Lothario's rapid departure soon became all too obvious. He had encountered Therese's mother during her journey, and succumbed to her charms, which she readily bestowed. This unfortunate interlude now prevented him from joining a woman, who seemed destined by nature to be his. Therese continued in her clearly defined sphere of activity and duties. As for Lydie, it became known that she was secretly dwelling in the neighborhood, happy that the marriage, for some unknown reason, had not taken place. She tried to draw closer to Lothario, and it seemed that he, more out of desperation than desire, more from surprise than due reflection, more from boredom than intention, responded to her wishes.

Therese was not upset by this. She made no further claims on him and, even if he had become her husband, she might have had strength enough to put up with his relationship with Lydie, so long as it did not disturb her domestic order. At least she often expressed the opinion that a woman who kept her household duties in good order could tolerate any flight of fancy on her husband's part, and still be certain that he would come back to her.

Therese's mother soon reduced her capital to a state of shambles, for which the daughter had to suffer, since nothing much remained for her. The old lady who had so befriended Therese, died and left her this small freehold estate and a sizeable amount of capital. Therese adapted herself immediately to her restricted circumstances. Lothario offered her a better piece of property and Jarno was the go-between. But this Therese declined, saying: "I want to show Lothario in something small, that I was worthy of sharing with him something that was bigger. But if some circumstance or other should put me in a situation of embarrassment for myself or others, I claim the right to address myself without further ado to my dear friend."

Nothing remains less concealed or less exploited than purposeful activity. As soon as she had established herself on her small estate, the neighbors came to make her acquaintance and seek her advice, and the new owner of the adjoining estates made it quite clear to her that it was entirely up to her whether she would accept his hand in marriage and become heir to the greater part of his fortune, or not. She had already mentioned this to Wilhelm and joked about marriage and mismarriage.

"There is nothing people enjoy talking about more than when a marriage takes place which they consider a mismarriage, or *mésalliance*. And yet 'mismarriages' are commoner than marriages, for most unions turn out soon enough to be misfits. Mixture of social classes through marriage only merits the name of 'mismarriage' when the one party cannot share in the established,

accustomed and therefore necessitated existence of the other party. Different strata of society have different lifestyles that they cannot share or exchange with each other, and that is why marriages of this kind are better not concluded. But exceptions, and very happy exceptions, are possible. For instance the marriage of a young girl to an old man is always a misfit, but I've known such a marriage to turn out quite well. For me there could only be one kind of mismatch— if I had to spend my time in shows and ceremonies. I would much rather marry an honest farmer's son from the neighborhood."

Wilhelm thought it was now time for him to return to Lothario's residence, and he asked Therese to create an opportunity for him to take his leave of Lydie. The hot-tempered girl was persuaded to see him and he was able to say a few kind words to her, to which she replied: "I have overcome my earlier distress. Lothario will always remain dear to me, but I regret that he is surrounded by friends whose real natures are now known to me. The Abbé is quite capable of leaving a person in a state of distress, or plunging him into it, on account of some mood that comes over him. The doctor always wants to clear things up. Jarno has no soul, and you, my friend, have at least no character! Continue what you are doing, allow yourself to be used as a tool by these three men, and they will certainly give you plenty of assignments. I realize that for a long time my presence has been distasteful to them. I have never discovered their secret, but I know that they have one. Why all these locked rooms? These mysterious corridors? Why can't anyone get to the big tower? Why did they confine me to my own room? I must confess that it was jealousy that first made me discover this; I feared that some favored rival was hidden away somewhere. I don't believe that any longer. I am convinced that Lothario loves me and means well, but I am equally convinced that he is misled by his pretentious, false friends. If you want to do him a service, if you are to be forgiven for the trouble you have caused me, then get him out of the hands of these men. But what can I hope for! Give him this letter, and repeat what it says: that I will always love him and rely on him. Oh!" she cried, standing up and sobbing on Therese's neck, "he is surrounded by my enemies, they will try to persuade him that I have made no sacrifices for him. The best of men like to hear they deserve every sacrifice without having to show their gratitude."

Wilhelm's leave-taking from Therese was a happier one. She expressed the desire to see him again soon. "You know all about me!" she said. "You let me do all the talking. Next time it will be your duty to respond equally confidentially."

While he was on his way back, he had ample time to reflect on this new, radiant personality. What confidences she had bestowed on him! He thought how happy Mignon and Felix would be in her care, and then he thought about himself and what a delight it would be to dwell in the presence of such a clear-minded human being. As he drew near to Lothario's castle, he was struck by the tower with the numerous corridors and side buildings. And he decided to ask the Abbé or Jarno about them.

Chapter Seven

When Wilhelm entered the castle he found that Lothario was well on the way to recovery. Neither the doctor nor the Abbé was there, but Jarno was. Lothario was soon well enough to ride, alone or with his friends. His talk was both serious and pleasant, his conversation with others instructive and stimulating. There were often signs of a quite delicate sensitivity, though he did what he could to conceal this; and if it showed itself against his will, he seemed almost to disapprove.

One evening he was very quiet at dinner, though he looked quite cheerful. "You must have had some adventure or other today, but apparently a pleasant one," said Jarno. "What a sound judge you are of people!" Lothario replied. "Yes indeed, I have had the most delightful adventure. Perhaps I would not have thought it so charming at any other time, but today it caught me in a very receptive mood. Toward evening I was riding through the various villages on the other side of the water, a route I had often taken in earlier years. My bodily sickness must have mellowed me more than I thought; I felt soft but, as my strength revived, I felt born anew. Every object around me appeared in the same light as they had in former years, so pleasant, so delightful, so charming—such as they had not seemed to me for a long time. I realized this was a form of weakness, but accepted it willingly, and rode gently on, understanding exactly how some people get to like illnesses that induce pleasant feelings. You know perhaps the reason why I used to take this particular path in the past?"

"If I remember correctly," said Jarno, "it was some little love affair involving a farmer's daughter."

"One might call it a big love affair," Lothario said in reply, "for we were both very much in love with each other, seriously in love and for quite a long time. Chance would have it that today everything combined to bring back to me those first days of our love. Boys were once again shaking june bugs out of trees, and the ash trees were no further in leaf than they were the first day that I saw them. It was a long time since I last saw Margarete, for she married and moved far away, though I had happened to hear that she had come with her children a few weeks earlier to stay with her father."

"So this particular route of yours was not accidentally chosen?" said Jarno.

"I cannot deny that I did hope to encounter her," said Lothario. "When I was drawing near to the house I saw her father sitting outside the door, with a child, about a year old, standing by his side; and as I came closer, a woman appeared briefly at an upstairs window. And when I got to the gate, I heard someone rushing down the steps. I thought this was certainly she, and flattered myself that she had recognized me and was running to meet me. But I was quite disconcerted when she rushed out of the door, picked up the child whom the horses were coming up to, and carried it back into the house. This gave me an unpleasant feeling, and my vanity was only slightly appeased when I noticed that her neck and one ear were reddened as she hurried away."

"I remained standing where I was, spoke to her father, and peered up at all the windows in search of some sign of her. But found none, and since I did not want to ask after her, I rode on. My irritation was somewhat tempered by the strange observation that, although I had scarcely been able to see her face, she seemed totally unchanged; and ten years is a long time! She seemed as young as ever: just as slim and just as quick on her feet, her neck almost lovelier than before, her cheek just as capable of that loving blush as ever—and yet the mother of six children, perhaps more. This vision was so appropriate to the world of magic surrounding me, that, feeling totally rejuvenated, I rode on further and did not turn back until the sun was going down over the next patch of woodland. And though the evening dew reminded me of my doctor's instructions and I knew it would be advisable for me now to go straight home, I did not, but instead went back by way of the farmhouse. I noticed that a woman was walking to and fro in the garden, which is surrounded by a low hedge. I rode up to the hedge on the outside path, and soon found myself near the person I was seeking.

"Although the evening sun was in my eyes, I could see that she was working near the hedge, which only partly obscured her. I believed this was my old love. As I came up to her, I stood still, not without some heartthrobs. Tall branches of wild roses, swayed by a gentle breeze, were concealing her somewhat. I spoke to her, and asked how she was. She answered me, rather softly: 'Quite well.' Then I noticed that there was a child behind the hedgerow picking flowers and I took the occasion to ask her where the other children were. 'This is not my child,' she said. 'That would be too early!' and at that moment it so happened that I caught sight of her face through the branches, and did not know what I should say to what I saw. For it was, and was not, my loved one. She was almost younger, almost lovelier than when I had known her ten years ago. 'Aren't you the farmer's daughter?' I asked, in some confusion. 'No,' she said. 'I'm her cousin.' 'But you are so extraordinarily alike.' 'That's what everyone says who knew her ten years ago,' said the girl.

"I proceeded to ask her about various other things. Although I had soon realized my mistake, I was quite pleased with it and could not tear myself away from the living image of former happiness that stood before me. The child had gone off in the direction of the pond looking for flowers. She took leave of me and ran after the child.

"Meanwhile I had discovered that my former beloved was indeed in her father's house, and as I rode back I was busy guessing whether it was she or her cousin who had protected the child from the horses. I went over the whole train of events in my mind and would find it hard to think of anything that could have delighted me more. But I do feel that I am still not well; so let's ask the doctor to relieve us all from further indulgence in this mood."

When love stories are being narrated, what usually happens is that one leads to the other, just like ghost stories. So our little group of people found much to retail in the way of recollection of times past. Lothario had most to relate. Jarno's stories all had their own individual stamp. And we know what Wilhelm

had to contribute. He was afraid that someone would remind him of his experience with the countess; but nobody thought about that.

"It is true," said Lothario, "that there is no pleasanter sensation than when one's heart, after a period of non-involvement, opens up in love to some new object; but I would gladly have done without that for the whole rest of my life, if fate had permitted me to join myself to Therese. Youth doesn't last forever, and childhood shouldn't either. What can be more desirable for a man who knows the world and what he has to do in it and hope from it, than to find a wife to work alongside him, taking care of everything that he cannot, operating in a broad sphere whereas he must follow a strait course? What a blessed life I dreamt of with her: not the blessings of ecstatic bliss, but the joys of a secure earthly life: order in joy, courage in misfortune, concern for every little detail, and a soul able to cope with larger matters and, in due course, dismiss them. I saw in her those qualities we admire when history shows us women far superior to any men: a clear perception of circumstances, ability to deal with all eventualities, that confidence in dealing with detail which works to the advantage of the whole without their thinking about it. You will surely forgive me," he said, turning to Wilhelm with a smile, "for being seduced away from Aurelie by Therese. With Therese I could hope for lifelong happiness, whereas with Aurelie I could not hope for one happy hour."

"I cannot deny that I came here with great bitterness," said Wilhelm, "and had made up my mind to upbraid you for your behavior toward Aurelie."

"I certainly deserve blame for that," said Lothario. "I should not have confused friendship with love. I should not have allowed affection to invade the respect she deserved, affection that she could neither arouse in me nor receive from me in return. She was not lovable when she loved, and that is the worst misfortune that can befall a woman."

"That may be," said Wilhelm in reply. "But we cannot always avoid the reproach that our actions and sentiments have been diverted in some strange way from their natural course. There are responsibilities we must never lose sight of. May she rest in peace; and let us, without blaming her or ourselves, scatter blossoms of pity upon her grave. But let me ask you this: faced with the grave of this unhappy mother, why do you not take charge of the child, a boy that everyone would delight in but you seem entirely to neglect? How can you, with all your good-heartedness and delicate feelings, completely deny those of a father? You have not said one word the whole time about the precious child whose grace and charm beggar description?"

"Whom are you referring to? I don't understand," said Lothario.

"Why, your son, of course: Aurelie's son, that lovely child who only lacks the care of a loving father to make him happy."

"You're making a big mistake," said Lothario. "Aurelie never had a son. At least, not by me. I know nothing about a child. If I did, I would of course have taken charge of it. As for the present situation: I will consider this little creature as a bequest from her, and gladly take charge of its education. Did she ever give any indication that the child belonged to her or to me?"

"I do not recall any express statement to that effect," said Wilhelm. "But it was generally assumed to be so, and I myself never doubted it for a moment."

"I can offer some clarification," said Jarno, breaking into their conversation. "An old woman, whom you must have seen often, brought the child to Aurelie, who was delighted to take it over, hoping that its presence would mitigate her sufferings. And it did indeed provide her with many happy moments."

Wilhelm was greatly disturbed by this report. He had a clear mental picture of the good-hearted Mignon standing beside the handsome Felix, and this made him wish to remove them both from their present environment.

"Let's deal with that right away," said Lothario. "We'll place the strange girl in the charge of Therese, where she couldn't be in better hands. And, as for the boy, I would suggest that you, Wilhelm, should take care of him. For what women leave unfinished in our education, children complete by our association with them."

"I think," said Jarno, "that you should abandon your association with the theater, for you have no talent for it."

Wilhelm was thunderstruck. He had to compose himself, for Jarno's harsh words had deeply offended his self-esteem. "If you can convince me of that," he said with a forced smile, "you will be doing me a great service, though it is always sad to be shaken out of a pleasant dream."

"Let's not discuss that any further at the moment," Jarno replied. "I would urge you to go and fetch the children. The rest will take care of itself."

"I am prepared to do that," said Wilhelm. "I am uneasy, both eager to find out more about the boy and anxious to see the girl again who has attached herself to me so peculiarly."

It was agreed that he should leave as soon as possible. He was ready to go the next day, his horse was saddled, but he first wanted to take his leave of Lothario. When dinner time came around, they all seated themselves at table, but without their host. He arrived rather late, but did not join them. "I bet you have been testing out your tender feelings again today, and have not withstood the urge to see your former beloved once more." "Correct!" said Lothario. "Tell us how it went. I'm very curious," said Jarno.

"I won't deny that this whole adventure was unduly obsessing my mind, and so I decided to ride out there once more and really see the person whose rejuvenated appearance had caused me such a pleasant illusion. I dismounted at some distance from the house, had the horses led off to the side so as not to disturb the children playing by the gate. I went into the house, and it so happened that she came walking toward me, for it was she, and I recognized her despite the fact that she had greatly changed. She was heavier, and seemed to be taller. Her grace of manner shone through a certain setness, and her gaiety had been transformed into a quiet reflectiveness. Her head, which she had formerly held aloft so freely and easily, hung a little, and there were slight wrinkles in her forehead.

"She lowered her eyes when she saw me, but there was no blushing to indicate that her feelings were engaged. I gave her my hand; she gave me hers. I asked after her husband: he wasn't at home. I inquired after the children: she stepped up to the door and called them in. They gathered around her. There is no more charming sight than that of a mother with a child in her arms, and none more dignified than that of one surrounded by a group of children. I asked what their names were—just in order to have something to say. She invited me to step inside and wait for their father. I did this, was led into the parlor, where I found that almost everything was still as it had been, and, strange to say, her attractive cousin, her living image, was sitting on the same stool behind the distaff where I had so often seen my loved one, and looking exactly like her. A little girl, the living image of her mother, had followed us, and I found myself presently situated between past and future, strangely like being in an orange grove where in one small area blossoms and fruits are ranged side by side. Her cousin left the room to get some refreshments. I pressed the hand of the woman I had once loved so dearly, and said: 'It is a great joy for me to see you again.' 'You are very kind to say that,' she replied. 'I can assure you that I too am extremely pleased to see you. Many has been the time that I have wished to see you once more during my life, sometimes at moments that I thought might be my last.' She said this in a firm voice, without pathos, quite naturally, in the tone that had always delighted me. Her cousin came back, then her husband arrived—and I will leave you to imagine my feelings as I stayed, and when I left."

Chapter Eight

On his way to the town Wilhelm thought about all the fine women he knew or had heard about, their strange lives, so deprived of happiness, painfully present to his mind. "Oh, poor Mariane," he cried, "what more do I have to learn about you? And you, glorious Amazon, noble guiding spirit, to whom I am so greatly indebted, whom I am always trying to find again and never can, in what sad circumstances shall I find you when we meet again!"

None of his acquaintances were at home. So he ran to the theater, expecting to find them rehearsing. Everything was quiet, the whole house seemed empty, but he saw that one shutter was open. When he walked on to the stage he found Aurelie's old servant-woman stitching together some pieces of canvas for a new piece of scenery, and the only light coming in was what was needed for her to see what she was doing. Felix and Mignon were sitting on the floor beside her, holding a book. Mignon was reading aloud and Felix repeating the words after her as if he already knew his letters and could really read.

Both children jumped up to welcome him. He embraced them fondly and then led them back to where the old woman was. "Are you the one who

brought this child to Aurelie?" he asked her in a solemn tone of voice. The old woman looked up from her work and turned her face toward him. He looked at her in the light, shuddered, and stepped back a few paces: it was old Barbara. "Where is Mariane?" he cried. "Far away," said the old woman. "And Felix . . .?" "Is the son of that unhappy girl who loved too ardently. May you never realize the pain you have caused us! May the treasure that I hand over to you make you as happy as he has made us unhappy!"

She stood up with the intention of leaving. But Wilhelm held her fast. "I'm not trying to run away from you," she said. "Just let me fetch a document that will give you both pleasure and pain." She left, and Wilhelm gazed at the boy in timorous joy, for he could not yet acknowledge the child as his own. "He is yours," said Mignon, "he is yours," and she pressed the child against his knees.

The old woman returned, and handed him a letter. "Here are Mariane's last words," she said. "She is dead, then?" he cried. "Yes, dead!" said Barbara. "I wish I could spare you all my reproaches."

Surprised and bewildered, Wilhelm broke open the letter. He had only read the first words of it when bitter sorrow overcame him. He dropped the letter, fell down on a mossy bank, and lay there for some time. Mignon busied herself with him, Felix picked up the letter and tugged her until she responded by kneeling down beside him and reading it aloud to him. Felix repeated the words after her, and Wilhelm was therefore obliged to hear them twice over. "If this letter should ever reach you, then have pity on the unhappy girl who loved you. Your love has killed her. This boy, whose birth I shall outlive but a few days, is yours. I die faithful to you, however much appearances may speak against me. In losing you, I lost all that bound me to life. I die content, because they assure me that the child is healthy and will live. Listen to what Barbara has to say, forgive her, farewell, and do not forget me!"

What a painful and yet, thank goodness, unclear and mysterious letter, the contents of which he only really understood as the children, stumbling and stammering, read it aloud and repeated it.

"There you have it!" said the old woman, not waiting until he had recovered himself. "Give your thanks to Heaven that, after the loss of such a good young woman, you are left with such a marvelous child. When you learn how true she was to you, right up to the end, how unhappy she was, and what sacrifices she made for your sake, you will be utterly distressed."

"Let me drink to the dregs the cup of sorrow and joy!" he exclaimed. "Convince me, indeed persuade me by what you have to say, that she was a good girl who deserved my respect as well as my love; then leave me to my sorrow at her irreplaceable loss."

"Now is not the time," she replied. "I have work to do, and I don't want anyone to find us together. Let it remain a secret that Felix is yours, otherwise I will have to put up with too many reproaches from the company for my previous pretenses. Mignon won't give us away: she is a good girl and keeps her mouth shut."

"I've known it for a long time, but I haven't said anything," Mignon answered. "How is that possible?" the old woman said. "How did you find it out?" Wilhelm asked. "The Ghost told me." "How? When?" "In the cellar when the old man drew the knife. I heard someone say: 'Go and get his father.' Then I knew it was you." "But who said this to you?" "I don't know. In my heart, in my head, I was so terrified, I was trembling, I prayed, then I heard it, and I understood."

Wilhelm pressed her to his heart, told her to look after Felix, and left. Only then did he notice that she had become much thinner and paler since he went away. The first of his acquaintances that he ran across was Madame Melina, who welcomed him warmly. "I hope," she said, "that you will find everything as you would wish it." "I doubt that," said Wilhelm, "and I'm not expecting to. Why don't you admit that all the arrangements have been made to dispense with my services?" "But why did you go away?" she said. "It's never too early to realize that no one is indispensable in this world," said Wilhelm. "How important we think we are! We imagine that we are the only real driving force in our sphere of activity and that when we are no longer there, everything will come to a standstill and wither away. But the space, at first hardly noticed, is filled up quite quickly, and even becomes the seed-ground of more pleasant, if not better things."

"And no allowance is made for the sorrow of our friends?" she asked in return.

"Our friends," Wilhelm replied, "will do well to reconcile themselves immediately to the change and say to themselves: Wherever you are, wherever you settle, be active and gracious, and let your life be untroubled."

On further inquiry Wilhelm discovered that what he had expected, had indeed happened: opera had been introduced, and was captivating the public. His former roles had now been divided up between Laertes and Horatio, both of whom were receiving much greater acclaim than he himself had ever done.

At that moment in came Laertes, and Madame Melina exclaimed: "Just look at this fortunate young man who will soon be a capitalist and heaven knows what else!" Wilhelm embraced him and felt the fine texture of his coat. The rest of his clothing was simple, but all of the highest quality. "Explain the mystery!" Wilhelm said to him. "It is high time you knew that my restlessness is at last paying off," said Laertes. "The head of a big business house is profiting from my unsettledness, as well as from my knowledge and acquaintanceships, and allows me a good cut for myself. I would give a great deal if I could also negotiate trust from the women, for there is a pretty niece in the office and I can see that, if I so desired, I could soon become a made man."

"You probably don't know," said Madame Melina, "that there's been a wedding here. Serlo is married to the lovely Elmire, her father having refused to approve of the continuation of their private intimacy."

They told him about many things that had occurred in his absence, from which he perceived that he had long since become estranged from the general tone and spirit of the company.

He waited anxiously for Barbara, who had announced that she would come to see him at the strange hour of dead of night, when everyone was asleep, as if she were a young girl creeping to her lover. While he was waiting, he read through Mariane's letter time and time again, read the word "faithful" from her beloved hand with inexpressible delight, and then, with horror, the announcement of her impending death, which she seemed not to fear.

It was past midnight when there was a noise at the half-open door and Barbara came in with a basket. "I am here," she said, "to give you an account of all our sufferings, but I expect that you will remain quite unmoved. Your eagerness to see me is simply in order to satisfy your curiosity and I expect that you will envelop yourself in your own cold selfish interests, as you always did while our hearts were breaking. But look here! This is how I brought out the champagne on that happy evening, put three glasses on the table, and you began to beguile us and make us drowsy with happy childhood tales, whereas tonight I will enlighten you and keep you alert with sad truths."

Wilhelm did not know what to say when the old woman removed the cork and filled three glasses. "Drink up," she said, quickly emptying her own glass, "drink up before the mood passes. I will let this third glass lose its sparkling bubbles, in memory of that unhappy girl. How red her lips were when she spoke of you then, and how pale and rigid they have become for evermore!"

"You old witch, you monstrous fury!" Wilhelm cried, jumping up and banging his fist on the table. "What sort of evil spirit can it be that possesses and impels you? Who do you think I am, if you imagine that even the simplest account of Mariane's sorrow and death would not distress me greatly, and why do you need to have recourse to such devilish tricks to increase my torment? If your incessant tipling won't refrain from indulging itself at a funeral feast, then go ahead, and drink as you talk! I have always loathed you, and I cannot contemplate the idea of Mariane's being innocent, when I look at her companion."

"Take it easy, sir," she said in reply. "You won't rattle me. You still owe us a great debt, and one doesn't allow oneself to be insulted by debtors. But you're right: just the simplest account will be punishment enough for you. Listen then to Mariane's struggles, and her victory in the battle to remain yours."

"Mine?" said Wilhelm. "What sort of fairy tale is this to be?"

"Don't interrupt me, just listen to what I have to say. Then believe what you will—it makes no difference any longer. On that last evening with us did you not find a note and take it away with you?"

"I did not find it at the time, but afterwards. It was tucked in the scarf, which I grabbed in the heat of my emotions and put in my pocket."

"What did the note contain?"

"The expectations of a discontented lover to be better received the following night than he had the previous one. And I saw with my own eyes that his hopes were fulfilled, for it was daybreak when he came creeping out of your house."

"You may well have seen him then, but only now shall you learn how sadly Mariane spent that night and how vexed I was. I will be quite honest and not

deny or gloss over the fact that I did encourage Mariane to give herself to this man named Norberg. She followed my advice, but, I can truly say, with distaste. He was rich, appeared to be in love with her, and I hoped he would remain constant. Soon after this he had to go on a journey, and it was then that Mariane came to know you. What I had to put up with as a result of that! The things I had to prevent, or to tolerate! 'Oh!' she would cry, 'if only you had spared my youth and my innocence for four more weeks, then I would have found a worthy object for my love. I would have been worthy of him, and love would have given me with a clear conscience what I have now sold against my will.' She abandoned herself entirely to her affection, and I dare not ask if you for your part were happy. I had unlimited power over her mind, for I was acquainted with every means of satisfying her smallest desires; but I had no power over her heart, for she never approved anything I did for her or tried to persuade her to do, if it was against the dictates of her heart. She only yielded to inescapable need, and need soon become oppressive to her. In her early youth she had been provided with everything, but her family lost its fortune through a series of complicated circumstances. The poor girl had grown accustomed to various needs, and some good principles had been implanted into her young mind, which made her uneasy but did not help much. She had absolutely no adroitness in worldly affairs, she was innocent in the true sense of the word, she had no idea that one could buy something without paying for it. What she feared most was being in debt, she would always rather give than take, and it was this sort of situation that forced her to give herself in order to clear up a number of minor debts."

"And couldn't you have saved her from that?" Wilhelm exclaimed angrily.

"Of course," the old woman replied, "with hunger and want, sorrow and privation, but I was never prepared for that."

"You hideous, despicable procuress! So you sacrificed this unhappy creature for the sake of your own swilling and gluttony?"

"You would do better to control yourself and stop using such insulting expressions," said the old woman. "If you want to curse and swear, why not go into one of your fine houses—you will find mothers there who are anxiously concerned to find the most loathsome men for their lovely, radiant daughters, so long as they are very rich. And you will see the poor young creatures trembling at the fate in store for them, and utterly distressed, until some more experienced woman friend points out to them that by marrying they will acquire the right to dispose of their hearts and persons as they wish."

"Hold your tongue!" Wilhelm shouted at her. "Do you really think one crime can be excused by another? Get on with your story without further asides!"

"Then listen, and stop reproaching me! Mariane became yours against my will. I have nothing to blame myself for in the whole adventure. Norberg came back and rushed to see Mariane. She received him coldly and petulantly and did not even allow him one kiss. I needed all my skill to excuse her behavior. I told him that a father-confessor had pricked her conscience, and that when

conscience speaks, one must respect it. I finally got him to leave and promised to do my best for him. He was rich and coarse, but he was basically good-natured, and loved Mariane intensely. He promised me to be patient, and I worked all the harder to see he was not too much tested. I had a hard time with Mariane: I persuaded her—in fact I forced her finally, by threat of leaving her, to write to her lover and invite him for that night. Then you came and accidentally picked up his reply in her scarf. Your unexpected arrival wrecked my plans. No sooner had you left than all her torment returned. She swore she would not be unfaithful to you. She was so full of passion, so completely beside herself, that she aroused my heartfelt pity. I finally promised her that I would pacify Norberg that night and try to get him to leave on some pretext or other. I urged her to go to bed, but she seemed not to trust me. She remained fully dressed, but finally fell asleep in her clothes, overwrought and drained by tears as she was.

“Norberg came. I tried to ward him off, presenting to him in darkest colors her anguish of conscience and remorse. He asked only to see her, and I went into her room to prepare her for this. But he followed me in and we both approached her bed at the same moment. She awoke, jumped up angrily and tore herself away from us, imploring, beseeching, threatening and finally declaring she would not give way. She was unwise enough to let drop a few hints as to where her real affections lay, which poor Norberg interpreted in a spiritual sense. At length he left her, and she locked herself in. I kept him for a long time, talking to him about the condition she was in, telling him she was pregnant and should therefore be treated with consideration. He was so proud at the thought of becoming a father, so looking forward to having a son, that he agreed to everything she demanded of him, promising to go away for a while rather than cause her anxiety and harm. With such thoughts in his mind he crept off in the early morning, and you, sir, standing sentry as you were, would have needed only to look into your rival’s heart, which you thought was so privileged and happy, for your own assurance, though his appearing at that moment had persuaded you to despair.”

“Are you telling the truth?” Wilhelm asked. “Truth, such as I hope will cause you once more to despair,” she replied.

“You would certainly be driven to despair if I could describe to you in true colors the morning that followed. How happy she was when she woke up! Her voice was so cheerful when she called me in, she thanked me eagerly, pressing me affectionately to her bosom. ‘Now,’ she said, looking at herself smilingly in the mirror, ‘now I can be pleased with myself and my appearance, now that I belong to myself and my beloved friend once again. How sweet it is to have overcome! What a glorious feeling it is to follow one’s own heart! How thankful I am to you for taking my part and using your shrewdness and wits to my advantage! Help me to attain my greatest happiness.’

“I went along with what she was saying, not wishing to upset her. I encouraged her in her expectations, and she caressed me fondly. When she left

the window for a moment I had to stand guard, for sometime you were bound to walk past and we were anxious at least to see you. And so the whole day passed, and we were restless. We were sure you would come that night at the usual hour. I was watching on the stairway, time hung heavy on me, and so I went back up to her room. To my surprise I found her in her officer's costume, looking charming and radiant. 'Don't I deserve to appear in men's clothing today? Haven't I been bold? I want my lover to see me as he did that first evening, and I will hug him as warmly and with even more abandon than I did then. For now I am much more his than I was when I had not yet broken loose in a noble decision. But,' she added somewhat pensively, 'I have not yet completely won out. I must still take the great risk of telling him everything about my situation, in order to be worthy and certain of him—then it will be up to him whether he keeps me or rejects me. This is a scene which I am arranging for us both; and if he finds himself able in his heart to reject me, then I will once more belong only to myself, find consolation in that punishment, and bear whatever fate has in store for me.'

"It was with such feelings and hopes, sir, that the lovely girl waited for you; but you never came. How shall I describe that state of waiting and hoping? I can still see her, speaking in such passionate, loving terms of the man whose cruelty she was still to experience!"

"Dear, old Barbara," Wilhelm cried, jumping up and grabbing her by the hand. "That's enough pretense and preparation. Your calm sober tone has given you away. Mariane is still alive, living somewhere in the neighborhood. Give her back to me. It was not by chance that you chose this late, lonely hour to visit me, and prepared me by recounting that excellent tale. Where have you hidden her? I'll believe everything you say, I give you my word on that, when you show me where she is and restore her to my arms. I saw her shadow passing over us. Let me now clasp her firmly in my arms. Then I will kneel before her, asking for forgiveness, congratulating her on her success in her battle with herself and you—and then I will bring my Felix to her. Tell me: Where have you hidden her? Don't leave me any longer in this state of uncertainty! You've achieved your purpose. Now, where is she? Let's use this light to find out, to see her lovely face once more!"

He dragged the old woman up from the chair; she looked blankly into his face, tears streamed from her eyes and she was seized by a sudden access of grief. "What unfortunate confusion is it that gives you any such hope? I have indeed hidden her—beneath the earth, and neither the open light of the sun nor the intimate gleam of a candle will ever shine upon her sweet face. Take little Felix to her grave, and tell him that there lies his mother whom his father unjustly condemned. Her loving heart no longer throbs impatiently to see you. She is not waiting in some nearby room for me to finish my story. The dark chamber has received her where no bridegroom may follow, from where no one can walk toward his beloved."

She threw herself down beside a chair and wept bitterly. For the first time Wilhelm was completely convinced that Mariane was dead, and he was over-

come with grief. Barbara rose to her feet, declared that she had nothing more to say to him, and threw a wallet on to the table. "These letters," she said, "will make you ashamed that you were so cruel. Read them through with dry eyes, if you can." She crept quietly away, and Wilhelm did not have the heart that night to open the wallet, which was the same one as he had given Mariane, for he knew that in it she had carefully kept all the messages he sent her. Next morning he felt able to take this upon himself, he opened the seal, and little pencilled notes in his own hand fell out, reminding him of every occasion from the first day of their relationship to that last ghastly moment of parting. In bitter distress he read through a whole series of notes she had written to him which, he could see from their content, had been returned by Werner.

"None of my letters has got through to you, none of my pleas and appeals has reached you. Was it you yourself who gave those cruel orders? Am I really never to see you again? I will try once more; I implore you to come! I shall not insist on keeping you here, but if only I could press you one more time to my heart."

"When I was sitting beside you, holding your hands, gazing up into your eyes, and from the depths of my heart would say, lovingly and trustingly: 'you dear, good man,' you used to like to hear that, and I had to say it over and over again. So now I say once more: 'dear, dear, good man,' be as good as you were, come, and don't let me perish in misery."

"You think I'm to blame, and I am, but not in the way you think. Come, so that I may have the consolation of your knowing all about me, no matter what may happen to me afterwards."

"It is not for my sake alone, but also for yours that I am asking you to come to me. I can feel your unbearable suffering in fleeing me. Please come, so that our parting may be less cruel! Never perhaps was I more worthy of you than when you thrust me into utter misery!"

"I implore you by all that is sacred, by everything that can move a human heart, to consider that a soul is at stake, a life, two lives, one of which must always remain dear to you. Your mistrustful nature will not believe this, but I will maintain it even in the hour of my death: the child that I carry is yours. Since I fell in love with you, nobody else has even clasped my hands. If only your love and your goodness had been the companions of my youth!"

"You will not listen to me? Then I must keep silent, but these letters will not disappear. Perhaps they will speak to you when my lips are covered by a shroud, and the sound of your regrets shall no longer reach my ear. My only comfort throughout the whole sad course of my life shall be to know that I was not guilty, though I cannot call myself innocent."

Wilhelm could not read any further. He gave way entirely to grief, but was even more oppressed when Laertes came in and he tried to conceal his feelings from him. Laertes pulled out a purse full of ducats, counted them and firmly declared there was nothing more splendid than being about to be rich, for then

nothing can disturb or impede us. Wilhelm remembered his dream, and smiled; but at the same time he recalled with a shock that in that same dream Mariane had left him and followed his dead father, and that both of them had floated over the garden like spirits.

Laertes distracted him from his reverie by taking him to a coffeehouse, where he found himself surrounded by several persons who had enjoyed seeing him on the stage, and were glad to see him again; but they regretted that, as they had heard, he was intending to give up acting. They spoke so perceptively and positively about him and his acting, the quality of his talent, and their hopes for him—so much so that Wilhelm finally exclaimed: “If only you had shown such appreciation several months ago! How I would have valued that! How encouraging that would have been! I would then never have so totally turned away from the theater in my mind, and no longer despaired of my public.”

“You should never have felt like that about your audience,” said an elderly man in the group. “The public is large, and keen understanding and sincere appreciation are not as rare as you think. But no artist should demand unlimited approbation of what he does; for unlimited approval is not worth much, though you gentlemen of the stage do not care for limited approval. I know full well that, in life as in art, we must seek our own opinion before doing or producing something, and only after we have done or produced it, should we pay attention to the opinions of others; and, once one has had some experience in this, one will know how to deduce a total judgment from a variety of opinions, for those persons whose opinion could spare us this labor, usually keep silent.”

“But they shouldn’t,” said Wilhelm. “I have often heard that persons who themselves express no opinion on even good plays, complain when no opinions are expressed.”

“Well, let’s be vocal today, anyhow,” said one young man. “You must dine with us, and then we will be able to catch up on what we should have said to you, and sometimes to dear Aurelie.”

Wilhelm declined the invitation and went to visit Madame Melina. He wanted to talk to her about the children, since he was intending to take them away from her.

The secret that Barbara had entrusted to him he was not well able to keep to himself. Every time he looked at Felix he gave himself away. “Oh, my child, my dear child,” he cried, picking him up and pressing him to his chest. “What did you bring me, father?” the child asked. Mignon looked at both of them, as if to warn them not to give themselves away. “What’s all this about?” said Madame Melina. The children were taken aside, and Wilhelm, feeling he did not have to maintain secrecy on what the old woman had told him, revealed the whole story to Madame Melina. She looked at him with a smile. “O, men are such credulous creatures! It’s easy to sell them a bill of goods if their thoughts were tending in that direction anyway; and there are times when they blindly

assert the value of what they previously had termed a passing infatuation." But she could not suppress a sigh, and if Wilhelm had not been completely blind, he would have noticed that her behavior revealed a fondness for him that she had never entirely overcome.

He then spoke to her about the children, telling her that he was intending himself to keep Felix, but send Mignon to the country. Although Madame Melina was unwilling to be parted from both children at once, she thought his proposal was a good one, indeed a necessary one. Felix was becoming rather wild, and Mignon seemed to need fresh air and a different environment, for the poor child was sickly, and was not getting any better.

"Make no mistake about it," said Madame Melina. "I was not being frivolous when I expressed some doubts whether the boy is really yours. That old woman is not all that much to be trusted; and yet someone who can use untruth to her advantage, can also speak the truth if that seems useful to her. She pretended to Aurelie that Felix was the son of Lothario, and we women have this peculiarity that we love the children of our lovers, even if we do not know, or profoundly hate, their mothers." Felix came running into the room, and she clasped him to her breast with affection unusual in her.

Wilhelm went straight home and asked Barbara to come to see him, which she agreed to do but not before dusk. He received her angrily, and said: "There is nothing more disgraceful than depending on lies and idle fictions. You've already done enough harm with such things, and now, when what you have said may determine my whole life's happiness, I'm full of doubts and don't dare to embrace this child, whose undisturbed possession could make me blissfully happy. The very sight of you fills me with hatred and contempt."

"If I'm to be honest, I must say that your behavior seems to me insufferable," she replied to this outburst. "And even if this were not your own son, it is such a beautiful, such a delightful child, that anyone would buy it for any price, just to have it around. Doesn't he deserve your taking charge of him? Don't I deserve for all the pain and trouble I have taken on this child's account, don't I deserve some little support for the rest of my life? Oh you fine gentlemen, you who have everything, you do well to talk about truth and honesty; but there would be much to say on how a poor creature whose meager needs were never answered, who in all her troubles was entirely without friends, help or advice and had to make her way amidst selfish people and finally succumb—there would be much to say about that, if you would only listen. Have you read Mariane's letters? She wrote them at the time of her greatest unhappiness. In vain did I try to reach you and give you those letters, but your brutal brother-in-law had so hedged you around that all my guile and skill did not suffice, and when at length he threatened me and Mariane with imprisonment, I had to abandon all hope. Doesn't everything in those letters confirm what I have told you? Doesn't Norberg's own letter remove all your doubts?"

"What letter from Norberg?" Wilhelm asked.

"Didn't you find it in the wallet?" she replied.

"I haven't yet read all it contains."

"Then hand me the wallet! Here, this is the document I mean. It was Norberg's unfortunate letter that caused the confusion, but this other one will clear things up, if indeed there is anything to clear up." She took a sheet of paper out of the wallet, Wilhelm recognized the hateful hand, pulled himself together, and read these words: "Tell me, girl, how can you treat me like this? I would not have believed that a goddess could change me into a sighing swain. Instead of greeting me with open arms, you draw back as though in distaste. Is it right that I should spend the night sitting on a trunk with old Barbara in her room, with my beloved girl behind two closed doors? That is absolutely absurd. I promised to allow you some time for reflection and not to rush you, but I am maddened by every hour we lose. Haven't I done all I could to give you all the presents I could think of? If you still doubt my love, what else would you like to have? Just tell me, and you shall have it. I wish that priest who put such stuff in your head would go deaf and blind! Why did you have to land one like him; there are plenty of others more indulgent toward young people. All I can say is that things must change. I shall expect an answer these next few days, for I have to go away again soon, and if you are not kind and friendly again, then I will not come to see you anymore. . . ."

The letter went on at length in this fashion, always returning to the same point (to Wilhelm's painful satisfaction), and thereby vouching for the truth of Barbara's account. Another letter proved quite clearly that Mariane had not yielded, and several others sadly revealed to Wilhelm the whole story of this unfortunate girl right up to the time of her death.

Barbara had succeeded in calming the vulgar fellow down by degrees. She told him when Mariane died, leaving him to believe that Felix was his son. He sent her money from time to time, but she kept this for herself, having talked Aurelie into taking over the responsibility for Felix's upbringing. Unfortunately this secret source of funds soon dried up. Norberg had gone through most of his fortune in riotous living, and constant love affairs hardened his heart against the child he imagined to be his firstborn son.

Probable as this all sounded, and admirably as it all fitted together, Wilhelm could still not confidently give way to joy; he seemed to be afraid of a gift bestowed on him by some evil fate.

The old woman sensed his state of mind and said: "Only time will heal your uncertainty. Regard the child as not your own, pay careful attention to it, observe his talents, personality and abilities, and if you don't gradually come to see yourself in him, then you must have bad eyesight. For I can assure you that if I were a man, nobody would plant a child on me, but it is fortunate for us women that in such matters men are not as clear-sighted as we are."

After this Wilhelm came to an agreement with Barbara that he should take Felix with him and she would take Mignon to Therese. He would give Barbara a small allowance to spend however she wished.

He then summoned Mignon, to prepare her for the change. "Master!" she said. "Keep me with you, it will do me both good and ill." He explained to her that she was now fully grown and something should be done for her further education. "I am educated enough to love and to sorrow," she replied. He said she should pay attention to her health, that she needed constant care and the services of a competent doctor. "Why should they care for me, when there are so many to care for," she answered.

Having tried very hard to persuade her that he could not take her with him, he told her that he would take her to the house of friends, where he would often come to see her. But she seemed not to have heard anything he said. "You don't want me with you?" she asked. "Then perhaps it would be better to send me to the old Harper. The poor old man is so much alone." Wilhelm tried to assure her that the Harper was well taken care of. "I long for him every hour of the day," she said. "I did not notice that you were so attached to him while he was still living with us," said Wilhelm. "I was afraid of him when he was awake, I could not bear to look into his eyes," she said, "but when he was asleep, I would sit by his bedside, warding off the flies, and could never see enough of him. He gave me support in moments of terror. No one will ever know how much I owe him. If I had only known the way, I would have run to him before now."

Wilhelm gave her an account of the situation, and told her she was such a reasonable child, that this time too she should follow his wishes. "Reason is cruel," she said, "the heart is better. I will go wherever you wish, but let me have your Felix."

After much talk to and fro she stuck to her position, and so Wilhelm had to resign himself ultimately to entrusting both children to Barbara, who would take them to Therese. This was all the easier for him, because he was still afraid of acknowledging the handsome Felix as his son. He picked him up and carried him around. Felix liked to be lifted up to a mirror, and Wilhelm, without admitting it, searched out resemblances to himself. When these seemed apparent he would press the child to his bosom, but then, suddenly frightened by the thought that he might be deceiving himself, he would set the child down and let it run off. "Oh," he would cry, "if I were to claim this precious creature as my own and then it was taken away from me, I would be the unhappiest man on earth!"

The children left, and Wilhelm now decided to take his formal departure from the theater, feeling that he was already divorced from it, and only needed to make the break final. Mariane was no more, his two guardian spirits had left, and he followed them eagerly in his thoughts. The handsome boy was constantly in his mind's eyes, a vague vision of beauty, and he pictured him walking hand in hand with Therese through the fields and woods, growing up in the open air and alongside this open-minded, serene companion. Therese herself seemed to him even more estimable when he thought of Felix in her

company. He thought about her, with a smile, when he was in the audience at the theater, for like her he found that these performances hardly created any illusion for him.

Serlo and Melina were very polite as soon as they found out that he made no further claims to his previous position. Some members of the public wanted to see him appear again on stage, and, of the actors, no one more than Madame Melina.

It was with some feeling that he took his leave of her, saying: "If only people would not venture promises for the future! One is unable to keep the smallest of them, let alone realize those ambitions which are substantial. How ashamed I am when I remember what I promised you all on that unfortunate night when we were huddled together—despoiled, sick, injured and wounded—in that wretched inn. Misfortune had bolstered up my courage, and what value I placed on my own good intentions! But nothing has come of all that, absolutely nothing! I leave as your debtor, and I am lucky that no one respects my promise for more than it was worth, and no one has ever pressed me to make it good."

"Don't be unjust toward yourself," Madame Melina replied. "If no one else recognizes what you have done for us, I at least will acknowledge it. Our whole situation would have been totally different if we had not had you with us. Our intentions, like our desires, look quite different when they are accomplished and fulfilled, and we think we have not done or achieved anything."

"You will not calm my conscience by your friendly interpretation," Wilhelm replied. "And I will always think of myself as your debtor."

"It is quite possible that you are that, but not in the way that you think," she said. "We think it scandalous not to fulfill a promise given by word of mouth. But, my friend, a good person always makes too many promises, just by being himself! The confidence that he inspires, the affection he awakens, the hopes he arouses, are limitless; he will always remain a debtor, without being aware of that. Farewell. Our external conditions have turned out well under your guidance, but with you leaving, a gap will open up in my heart that will not be so easily filled."

Before he left, Wilhelm wrote a long letter to Werner. They had exchanged a few letters, but because they could never agree on anything, they had stopped writing to each other. Now that Wilhelm was about to do what the other had so ardently advocated, contact was possible again. He was in a position to say: I am leaving the theater and I am associating myself with men whose company is bound to lead me into a life of firm, honest activity. He inquired after his money and was surprised at himself for not having done so earlier. He did not know that people much concerned with their own inner life are apt to neglect external circumstances. This was the state in which he found himself: he seemed, for the first time now, to be aware that he needed external means to promote effective activity. He ventured forth in quite a different frame of mind than on his first journey. The prospects before him were appealing, and he hoped to achieve happiness along the way.

Chapter Nine

When Wilhelm arrived back at Lothario's estate, he found that much had changed. Jarno greeted him with the news that Lothario's uncle had died, and Lothario had gone to take possession of the estates willed to him. "You've come just at the right time," he said, "to help me and the Abbé. Lothario has entrusted us with important business regarding the purchase of estates in the neighborhood, a matter that has been brewing for quite a time—and now we have the requisite funds and credit. The only matter of concern is that another business house, not in this area, has designs on these estates also. But we have finally decided to go partners with them, otherwise each of us would have driven up the price unreasonably and unnecessarily. We seem to be dealing with a shrewd businessman. So we are working out calculations and proposals, and we must consider from a farming point of view how best to divide up the land so that each receives a good piece of property." The documents were produced, and the fields, pasturelands and buildings were carefully surveyed; but Wilhelm expressed the desire that Therese should also be consulted. They spent several days on all this, and Wilhelm had little time at first to tell his friends about his adventures—nor to inform them of his doubtful paternity which, though important to him, was treated lightly and received indifferently by them.

He had noticed that when the others were engaged in private conversation, at table or on walks, they would sometimes stop short and change the subject, thereby revealing that they had secrets amongst themselves. He remembered what Lydie had said, and gave it ever more credence because the whole side of the castle in front of him remained always inaccessible. Up till now he had sought in vain to find a passage and entry to certain galleries and above all to the ancient tower.

One evening Jarno said to him: "We can now justly consider you as one of us, and therefore it would be unreasonable not to introduce you further into our mysteries. When a man makes his first entry into the world, it is good that he have a high opinion of himself, believes he can acquire many excellent qualities, and therefore endeavors to do everything; but when his development has reached a certain stage, it is advantageous for him to lose himself in a larger whole, learn to live for others, and forget himself in dutiful activity for others. Only then will he come to know himself, for activity makes us compare ourselves with others. You will soon come to know the small world that exists right here, and how well known you are in it. Be dressed and ready tomorrow morning before sunrise."

Jarno came at the appointed hour and conducted him through familiar and unfamiliar rooms in the castle, then through several galleries, until finally they arrived before a huge old door strengthened with iron bands. Jarno knocked and the door opened just wide enough for a man to slip through. Jarno pushed him through, but did not follow behind. Wilhelm found himself

in a narrow dark space, everything was darkness around him and when he tried to take a step forward he stumbled. A voice, not entirely unfamiliar, called out to him: "Enter!" He then realized that the walls were covered with tapestries through which shone a dim light. "Enter!" it said once more. He lifted the tapestry and went in.

The hall in which he now found himself seemed at one time to have been a chapel. Instead of an altar there stood, at the top of some steps, a large table covered with a green cloth, and over it a drawn curtain which seemed to cover some painting or other. Off to the sides were some finely wrought cupboards, with wire grilles as in libraries, behind which were, instead of books, a large number of scrolls side by side. There was nobody else in the room. The light of the rising sun shone through the stained-glass windows directly into his face, and welcomed him.

"Be seated!" said a voice which appeared to come from the altar. Wilhelm sat down on a small armchair standing against the partition by the entrance. There was no other seat in the room, so he had to make do with this one, despite the fact that the morning sun was blinding him. But the chair was good and steady, so he could shield his eyes with his hand.

Then there was a slight sound and the curtain above the altar opened showing an empty dark space inside a frame. A man in ordinary clothes stepped forward and greeted him, saying: "Don't you recognize me? Don't you, amongst all the other things you would like to know, wish to find out where your grandfather's collection of works of art now is? Don't you remember the painting that especially appealed to you? Where do you think the sick prince is languishing at the moment?" Wilhelm had no difficulty in recognizing the stranger who on that momentous night had talked with him in the hostelry. "And perhaps this time," the man continued, "we could come to some agreement on fate and character."

Wilhelm was about to say something in reply, when the curtains quickly closed. "How strange!" he said to himself. "Can there be some pattern in chance events? Is what we call 'fate,' really only chance? Where can my grandfather's collection be; and why am I reminded of it in this solemn hour?"

He had no time for further reflection, because the curtain opened again, and there before his eyes stood a man whom he immediately recognized as the country priest of the boat trip with his jolly companions. He looked like the Abbé, but did not seem to be him. The man spoke with dignity and with a certain radiance on his face. This is what he said: "The duty of a teacher is not to preserve man from error, but to guide him in error, in fact to let him drink it in, in full draughts. That is the wisdom of teachers. For the man who only sips at error, can make do with it for quite a time, delighting in it as a rare pleasure. But a man who drinks it to the dregs, must recognize the error of his ways, unless he is mad." The curtain closed again, and this time Wilhelm did have time to reflect. "What error can the man be referring to," he asked himself, "except that which has dogged me all my life: seeking cultivation where none was to be found, imagining I could acquire a talent to which I had no propensity."

The curtain opened more quickly this time and an officer stepped out, saying in passing: "Learn to become acquainted with persons one can trust!" The curtain closed; and Wilhelm needed little time to recognize this officer as the one who had embraced him in the park of the count's castle, the man who was responsible for his thinking that Jarno was a recruiting officer. How he got here and who he was, were a complete mystery to Wilhelm. "If so many people have been taking an interest in you, knew what your life was and what was to be done about it, why didn't they guide you more firmly, more seriously?" he said to himself. "Why did they encourage your pastimes instead of deflecting you from them?"

"Do not remonstrate with us!" a voice declared. "You are saved, and on the way to your goal. You will not regret any of your follies, and not wish to repeat any of them. No man could have a happier fate." The curtain opened again, and there stood the old King of Denmark in full armor. "I am your father's ghost," said the figure in the frame, "and I depart in peace, for all I wished for you has been fulfilled more than I myself could imagine. Steep slopes can only be scaled by bypaths; on the plains, straight paths lead from one place to another. Farewell, and remember me when you partake of what I have prepared for you." Wilhelm was dumbfounded: he thought he heard his father's voice, and yet not; so confused was he by present reality and past memories.

He had not been musing long when in came the Abbé and stationed himself behind the green table. "Step forward!" he said to his astonished friend. Wilhelm stepped forward and mounted the steps. On the cloth covering the table lay a small scroll. "These are your Articles," said the Abbé. "Cherish them well, their content is important." Wilhelm took the scroll, opened it and read:

Certificate of Apprenticeship

Art is long, life is short, judgment difficult, opportunities fleeting. Action is easy, thinking is hard: acting after thinking, uncomfortable. Every beginning is joyous, every threshold a point of expectation. The boy stares in wonder, impressions condition him, he learns in playing, seriousness takes him by surprise. Imitation is natural to us all, but what to imitate is not easily ascertained. Rarely is the best discerned, still more rarely appreciated. Height attracts us, not the steps upwards; with the mountaintop in our eyes we linger lovingly on the plain. Only a part of art can be taught, an artist needs the whole. Those who know only half of it, are always confused and talk a lot; those who have the whole, act and talk little, or long afterwards. The former have no secrets and no strength, their teaching is like freshly baked bread, tasty and satisfying for one day; but flour cannot be sown and the fruits of the grain should not be ground. Words are good, but they are not the best. The best is not made clear by words. The spirit in which we act, is what is highest. Action can only be grasped by spirit and portrayed by spirit. No one knows what he is doing when he acts rightly, but we are always conscious of what is wrong. He who works only with signs, is a pedant, a hypocrite or a botcher. There are many such, and they get on well together. Their gossiping impedes the student, and their persistent mediocrity alarms those who are best. The teaching of a real artist opens

up sense; for where words are lacking, action speaks. A true pupil learns how to unravel the unknown from the known, and thereby develops toward mastery.

"That's enough!" said the Abbé. "Save the rest for some other time. Now look around in these cupboards."

Wilhelm walked up to them and looked at the names on the scrolls. To his amazement he found there Lothario's apprenticeship, Jarno's apprenticeship, and his own, in amongst many others with names unknown to him.

"May I hope some time to take a look at these scrolls?"

"Nothing is closed to you in this room anymore."

"May I ask one question?"

"Of course you may! And you can expect a decisive answer if it concerns a matter that is close to your heart and should be so."

"Very well, then! You strange wise men, whose sight can pierce so many mysteries, tell me if you will: is Felix really my son?"

"Praise be to you for asking that question!" exclaimed the Abbé, clapping his hands with joy. "Felix is your son! I swear it by all our most sacred mysteries. Felix is your son, and in spirit his deceased mother was not unworthy of you. Take unto yourself this lovely child from our hands, turn around, and dare to be happy."

Wilhelm heard a noise behind him, turned round, and saw the face of a child peering mischievously through the tapestries covering the entrance: it was Felix. The boy hid himself laughingly, once he was seen. "Come out!" said the Abbé. He came, his father rushed toward him, folded him in his arms and pressed him to his heart. "Yes, oh yes," said Wilhelm, "you are indeed mine! What a gift this is from Heaven that I have to thank my friends for! Where have you come from at this moment, my child?"

"Don't ask," said the Abbé. "Hail to you, young man. Your apprenticeship is completed, Nature has given you your freedom."

Book Eight

Chapter One

Felix ran out into the garden, and Wilhelm followed him in a state of exhilaration. It was the most beautiful morning, everything around him looked lovelier than ever, he was sublimely happy. Felix was a newcomer in this world of freedom and beauty, and his father was not much better acquainted with the things that the boy repeatedly and tirelessly asked about. They finally went up to the gardener, who could tell him names and uses of various plants. Wilhelm was observing nature through a new organ, and the child's curiosity and desire to learn made him aware how feeble his interest had been in the things outside himself and how little he knew, how few things he was familiar with. On this day, the happiest of his entire life, his own education seemed also to be beginning anew: he felt the need to inform himself, while being required to inform another.

Jarno and the Abbé had not reappeared, but in the evening they came with a visitor. Wilhelm was so astonished he could not believe his eyes. Werner hesitated a moment before recognizing him. They embraced each other affectionately, and neither could conceal the fact that he found the other changed. Werner thought that his friend was taller, stronger, more upright, more cultivated in manner and more pleasant in behavior. "I miss something of your earlier spontaneity, however," he added. "That will come back once we have recovered from our initial amazement at seeing each other again," said Wilhelm.

The impression that Werner made on him was by no means so favorable. The good fellow seemed to have regressed rather than advanced. He was much thinner, his pointed face seemed sharper and his nose longer, he was bald, his voice was loud and strident and his flat chest, dropping shoulders and pallid cheeks showed quite clearly that this was a sickly creature with a mania for work.

Wilhelm did not get out of his way to comment on this change, but Werner gave full vent to his delight in his friend. "My goodness!" he exclaimed, "you may have spent your time poorly and, as I suspect, made little profit, but you

have become a man of parts who will, in fact is bound to, make his own fortune. Don't squander or dissipate it this time; with your figure you should be able to get yourself a rich heiress." "You haven't changed a bit," said Wilhelm with a smile. "You've just seen your friend again after a long interval, and you are already treating him as a commodity, a source of speculation, from which profit may be gained."

Jarno and the Abbé seemed in no way surprised by this recognition scene, and left the two friends to expatiate at will on both past and present. Werner looked at Wilhelm from all sides, twisting and turning him to the point of making him embarrassed. "I've never seen anything like this," said Werner, "and yet I know I am not deceiving myself. Your eyes are more deep set, your forehead is broader, your nose is more delicate and your mouth is much more pleasant. Look at how you stand! How well everything fits together! Indolence makes one prosper, whereas I, poor wretch," he said, looking at himself in the mirror, "if I had not spent my time earning a mint of money, there wouldn't be anything to say for me."

Werner had never received Wilhelm's last letter. It was his firm with which Lothario intended to accomplish the joint purchase of the estates; and this was the occasion of Werner's visit. He had no idea that he would find Wilhelm there. The magistrate came, the papers were produced, and Werner found the conditions reasonable. "If you, as it seems, are well disposed towards this young man," he said, "see to it that our part of this is not reduced. It depends on my friend whether he wants to acquire the estate and expend part of his funds on it." Jarno and the Abbé assured him that they did not need to be reminded of that. They quickly settled their business and then Werner wanted to play a game of cards, in which the Abbé and Jarno joined him, for he was by now accustomed to spending every evening in this way.

When dinner was over and the two friends were alone together, they spent their time in eager questionings and discussion, each informing the other what he wished him to know. Wilhelm was full of praise for his present situation and his good fortune at being received into the company of such excellent persons. Werner, however, shook his head and said: "One should only believe what one sees with one's own eyes. Some of my most obliging friends have told me that you are consorting with a loose-living young nobleman, provide him with actresses, help him squander his money, and are responsible for his being on such bad terms with all his relatives." "I would be very distressed, both on my own account and on that of those good people, if actors were so misjudged," Wilhelm replied. "But my theatrical career has accustomed me to all kinds of slanderous defamation. How is it possible for people to judge our actions, when all they see is bits and pieces, a small part of something that contains both good and bad, and in its appearances is neither one nor the other. Put actors and actresses before them on an elevated platform, light the lamps, the whole thing is over and done with in an hour or so, and nobody really knows what to make of it."

He then asked about the family, his old friends, and his home town. Werner told him very quickly all that had changed, what was still there, and what was happening. "The women in the house are happy and content, for there is no lack of money. They spend half their time preening themselves, and the other half displaying themselves. They devote a reasonable amount of time to household affairs. My children are growing into sensible boys. I can already envision them sitting and writing, doing accounts, running errands, bargaining and selling things off. I want them all to have their own business as soon as possible. As for our capital, you will be delightfully surprised. As soon as we have settled about these estates, you must come back with me, for it seems as if you, by exercising some degree of reason, could take an active part in our affairs. Your new friends are to be complimented for putting you on the right path. I'm a silly fool to find out only now how fond I am of you, and I'm unable to take my eyes off you when you look so fine and well. Your appearance is quite different from the picture you once sent your sister, which caused quite a furor in the house. Mother and daughter thought the young man was charming, with his open-neck shirt, chest half bared, big ruff, loose hanging hair, round hat, short vest and baggy trousers—but I thought that outfit was pretty close to a clown's. But now you look like a man, except that I urge you to have your hair done in a pigtail, else you will be taken, with that loose hairstyle, for a Jew, and have to pay tolls."

Felix had come into the room while they were talking, and since no one was taking any notice of him, he had sat down on the sofa and fallen asleep. "Who's that brat?" Werner asked. For the moment Wilhelm did not have the courage to tell him the truth, nor the inclination to relate the whole story to someone who was by nature disinclined to believe him.

They then went off to inspect the estates and conclude their business. Wilhelm kept Felix close by him and, for his sake, took great pleasure in the property they were looking at. The child's eagerness for cherries and berries that would soon be ripe, reminded him of his own youth and his father's dutiful way of preparing, creating and preserving pleasures. He examined the plantings and buildings with great attention, actively considering how to restore and rebuild. He surveyed the world around him, but not like a bird of passage; a building was for him no longer a rapidly assembled shelter that would wither away before one left. Everything he planned was now to mature for the boy, and everything he built was to last for several generations. His apprenticeship was therefore completed in one sense, for along with the feeling of a father he had acquired the virtues of a solid citizen. His joy knew no bounds. "All moralizing is unnecessarily strict," he exclaimed. "Nature turns us, in her own pleasant way, into what we should be. Strange indeed are those demands of middle-class society that confuse and mislead us, finally demanding more from us than Nature herself. I deplore all attempts at developing us which obliterate the most effective means of education by forcing us towards the endpoint instead of giving us a sense of satisfaction along the way."

Much as he had seen in his life already, he now understood human nature through the eyes of the child. The theater, like the world as a whole, had appeared to him like a throw of dice, each of which counted for more on one face and less on the other, and only added up to a whole when they were counted together. But here in the child was, so to speak, one single die, on whose various faces the worth and worthlessness of human nature were clearly marked.

The child's demand for distinctions grew daily: once he had learnt that things have names, he wanted to hear them all. He believed his father must know everything, pestered him constantly with questions, and gave him cause to inquire after objects that he had never paid much attention to. A native impulse to find out the origin and end of everything soon became apparent. When he inquired where wind came from and where flames went to, his father became all too aware of his own limitations. He wondered how far human curiosity can extend and how much he could hope to satisfy it. The child's anger when it saw a living creature maltreated, pleased his father, who saw in it the sign of superior character. Felix set about the kitchenmaid when she was cutting up pigeons. However, this admirable disposition of his was counteracted by his merciless destruction of frogs and butterflies, and Wilhelm was reminded that there are many people who appear quite righteous when their passions are not aroused or when they are observing the actions of others.

The pleasant feeling that the boy was having a really good influence on his life was dispelled in a trice when he realized that the boy was educating him more than he the boy. He had nothing to object to in the boy, he was not capable of giving him a direction that he was not taking of his own accord, and even those bad habits that Aurelie had worked so hard to eradicate seemed to return after her death. He would still not close the door behind him, he still would not finish what was on his plate, and he was never more delighted than when people observed that he ate from the platter rather than his plate, left his glass standing, and drank out of the bottle. He was also quite charming when he sat in the corner with a book, and said, very earnestly: "I must study this learned stuff!" even though he couldn't as yet (and wouldn't) distinguish the letters of the alphabet.

When Wilhelm thought of how little he had done for the child and how little he was able to do for him, he was overcome by a sense of uneasiness, and this well-nigh outweighed his happiness. "Are we born so selfish," he said to himself, "that we are unable to care for someone other than ourselves? Here you are at the same point with this boy as you were with Mignon. You took charge of the poor child, her companionship delighted you, and yet you have cruelly neglected her. What have you done to give her the development she longed for? Nothing! You left her to her own devices, and to all the mischance she was necessarily exposed to in an uncultivated society. And now with this boy, who attracted you even before he was so precious to you—has your heart ever impelled you to do the slightest thing for him? It is high time that you stopped

wasting your time and that of others: pull yourself together and just think what you have to do for yourself and for those dear creatures that nature and affection bind so closely to you."

Actually, this soliloquy was just a prelude to his recognition of all that he had been thinking, worrying about, looking for, and finally decided on. He could no longer put off admitting to himself that, after repeated outbursts of sorrow at the loss of Mariane, he must now find a mother for the boy, and he could not find a better one than Therese. He now knew this excellent woman completely, and a wife and companion like her seemed the only possible person to whom he could safely entrust himself and his loved ones. Her noble affection for Lothario did not cause him any qualms, for the two of them were separated forever by a strange train of events. Therese thought of herself as free, and had spoken of marriage with a certain indifference, though also as something that was self-evident.

Having reasoned with himself for some time, he finally decided to tell her as much as he knew about himself. She should get to know him as well as he knew her, and he began to work over his own life story; but it seemed so totally lacking in events of any significance, and anything he would have to report was so little to his advantage that more than once he was tempted to give up the whole idea. Finally he decided to ask Jarno for the scroll of his apprenticeship from the tower, and Jarno said this was just the right time. So Wilhelm got possession of it.

It is a terrifying feeling for any worthy person to find himself in a situation where he is about to be informed about himself. All transitions are crises, and is not crisis a form of sickness? How unwilling we are, after we have been sick, to look at ourselves in a mirror! One feels better, but sees only the evidence of one's illness. Wilhelm was by now sufficiently prepared for the occasion, circumstances had given him the lead, his friends had not been sparing in their opinions, and although he unrolled the parchment with a certain hastiness, he found that he calmed down the more he read in it. The account of his life was related in every detail and with great incisiveness. His attention was not distracted by the report of individual events or momentary emotions, sympathetic comments enlightened him without embarrassing him, and he saw a picture of himself, not like a second self in a mirror, but a different self, one outside of him, as in a painting. One never approves of everything in a portrait, but one is always glad that a thoughtful mind has seen us thus and a superior talent enjoyed portraying us in such a way that a picture survives of what we were, and will survive longer than we will.

As the manuscript recalled every detail of Wilhelm's life, he began to compose in his mind his story for Therese, feeling almost ashamed at having nothing to match her own fine qualities, nothing that testified to any active purpose in his life. Detailed as the survey was in his thoughts, when he came to write it down in a letter, this turned out quite short: he asked for her friendship, if possible for her love, offered her his hand in marriage, and asked for a speedy reply.

After some inner doubt whether to seek the advice of his friends, especially Jarno and the Abbé, on this important matter, he decided not to. His mind was too firmly made up; the whole matter was too important for him to submit to the judgment of the best or most reasonable person in the world, and he was judicious enough to see that his letter went out with the very next post. Perhaps it was the feeling that, as emerged quite clearly from the scroll, there had been so many occasions in his life when he thought he was acting freely and unobserved, only to discover that he had indeed been observed, even directed; perhaps it was this that made him now unburden his heart freely, at least to Therese's heart, and let his fate depend on her decision alone. And so he had no qualms of conscience about circumventing his guardians and overseers on this important issue.

Chapter Two

He had just dispatched his letter when Lothario returned. Everyone expressed satisfaction that the important business in hand would soon be concluded, and Wilhelm awaited with eager anticipation for many different threads to be severed or joined and his future prospects be decided. Lothario greeted everyone most cordially. He was by now fully recovered, cheerful, and looking like a man who knows what he has to do, which nothing will prevent him from doing.

Wilhelm was not able to return his greeting with equal cordiality. "This," he had to admit to himself, "is the friend, the lover, the bridegroom of Therese, whom you intend forcibly to replace. Do you really think you can ever erase or banish the impression he has made on her?" If the letter had not already been on its way, he would probably never have dared to send it. But fortunately the die was cast, perhaps Therese had already decided, and perhaps only the distance between them was delaying a happy resolution. It would soon be decided whether there was to be gain or loss. He tried to find solace in such thoughts, but his heart was filled with feverish agitation. He had difficulty in giving much thought to the important business transactions on which to a certain extent his future prosperity depended. In such emotional moments as this, nothing else has much importance for any man, neither what is outside him nor what belongs to him.

It was fortunate for him that Lothario dealt with the matter nobly and Werner speedily. Werner, in his eagerness to acquire the splendid property, showed great delight at this gain to himself or rather to his friend Wilhelm, whereas Lothario for his part seemed to have quite other thoughts. "I cannot be pleased at acquiring such property unless it be honestly gained," he said. "Is that not the case here?" asked Werner. "Not exactly," Lothario replied. "Didn't we give them ready money for it?" "That we did," said Lothario, "and perhaps you will consider what I must remind you of as being unnecessarily scrupulous. I do not consider any acquisition of property an honest deal unless

the State is accorded that part which is due to it." "What do you mean?" said Werner. "Would you prefer that our freely bought lands were subject to taxation?" "Yes, I would," said Lothario, "up to a certain point. Our land will only be secure if it is treated like everybody else's. What reason should a farmer have in these times to consider his land as a less firmly established possession than that of a nobleman, except that the latter is not encumbered but encumbers him?"

"And what about the return on our capital investment?" said Werner.

"That will not be adversely affected if the State, in return for reasonable and regular tax payments, continues to allow us the feudal hocus-pocus by which we have complete right of disposal over our property, are not obliged to maintain it in such large units, and can divide it up more equally among our children, so that all of them may indulge in free vigorous activity instead of being restricted by hereditary privileges to justify which we have to invoke the spirits of our ancestors. And how much happier would men and women be, if they could have the free opportunity of advancing some worthy young woman or promising young man to a better position in life, without any further considerations. The State would acquire more and better citizens, and not be so often lacking in heads and hands."

"I can assure you," said Werner, "that in all my life I have never thought about the State, and only paid my dues and taxes because that was customary."

"Well," said Lothario, "I hope to be able to make a good patriot out of you. A good father is one who at mealtimes serves his children first; and a good citizen is one who pays what he owes the State before dealing with everything else."

These general reflections facilitated rather than delayed the completion of their business transaction, and when things were pretty well in order, Lothario said to Wilhelm: "I must now send you to a place where you are more urgently needed than here. My sister requests that you come to her as soon as possible. Poor Mignon seems to be wasting away and they think your coming may perhaps check her decline. My sister has sent me this letter from which you will see how important your coming would be to her." Lothario handed him the letter and Wilhelm, who had been listening to him in a state of great perturbation, recognized the countess's handwriting in the hastily written lines, and did not know what answer to give.

"Take Felix with you," Lothario added, "so that the two children may cheer each other up. My sister's carriage, in which my servants came back, is still ready. I'll give you horses to take you halfway; then you can take the post-horses. Goodbye; give my greetings to my sister, and tell her I will be coming to see her soon, and she should be prepared for a number of guests. My great-uncle's friend, the Marchese Cipriani, is on his way here. He was hoping to find the old man still alive so that they could entertain each other with recollections of past experiences and their mutual love of art. The Marchese is much younger than my uncle, to whom he owed the greater part of his

education. We must do all we can to try to fill the gap for the Marchese, and that is best done by assembling a fairly large group of people."

Lothario then went to his room, accompanied by the Abbé, Jarno having already left. Wilhelm rushed off to his own room, with no one to confide in, no one to dissuade him from embarking on what he anticipated with such trepidation. The young servant boy came and urged him to start packing, because they wanted to load up the horses that night, so as to be able to start out at dawn. Wilhelm did not know what to do, and finally said to himself: "Just see to it that you get away from this house; then you can decide what to do as you go along. You could stop at the halfway point and send a message back, putting in writing what you did not dare to say, and then just let things take their course." Despite having reached this decision, he spent a sleepless night; but the sight of Felix peacefully asleep encouraged him. "Oh!" he cried. "Who knows what tests still lie in store for me; who knows how much my past mistakes will return to torment me, and my good, sensible plans for the future miscarry! But the treasure I have here, may this never be taken from me, by inexorable, or beseechable, Fate! If this very best part of me were ever to be destroyed, this heart be torn from my heart, then farewell reason and sense, farewell care and caution, farewell every impulse of preservation! Be gone, all that sets us off from the animals! And if I am not permitted to put an end to all my misery, may early madness obliterate my consciousness before death's dark night dissolves it forever!"

He grasped the boy in his arms, kissed him, pressed him to his breast, and covered him with copious tears. The boy woke up. His bright eyes and friendly glance affected his father deeply. "What a scene it will be," he cried, "when I present you to the lovely countess, and she presses you to her bosom, that bosom which your father so deeply wounded! Must I not fear that she will thrust you from herself with a cry, when your touch reawakens her real, or imaginary, pain!"

The coachman did not allow him time for further reflection or choice, constraining him to get into the carriage before daybreak. Wilhelm saw to it that Felix was well wrapped up, for the morning was cold, though bright. The child saw the sun rise for the first time in his life. His astonishment at the first fiery glow, the increasing brightness of the light—his whole joy, and the strange remarks that accompanied this, were a delight to the father, who gazed into the child's heart, a calm, clear lake over which the sun rose and hovered.

The coachman unharnessed the horses in a small town, and rode back. Wilhelm secured a room in the inn, then asked himself whether he should go on, or stay there. Undecided, he took out the letter again, which he had not yet dared to reread, and saw that it contained the following words: "Send your young friend to me very soon. Mignon's condition has taken a turn for the worse these last two days. Sad as the occasion is, I would very much like to meet him."

Wilhelm had not paid attention to those final words when he first looked at the letter. He was frightened by them, and now firmly determined not to go. "Why is it," he cried, "that Lothario, who knows the whole story, did not tell her who I am? She can't be calmly expecting someone she already knows and would rather not see again; she is expecting a stranger—and who should walk in but me! I can see her recoiling, see her blushing. No; I cannot possibly face such a scene!" The horses had just been readied, but Wilhelm was determined to unload and stay where he was. His mind was in a state of complete turmoil. Hearing a girl coming upstairs to tell him all was prepared, he quickly tried to think up a reason that made it necessary to delay his departure. His eyes glanced through the note in his hand. "Heavens! what is this?" he cried. "This is not the countess's handwriting; it is the Amazon's!"

The girl came into the room, urging him to go down, and taking Felix with her. "How is this possible?" he said. "Can this be true? What am I to do? Stay and wait for an explanation, or get there quickly and plunge into whatever ensues? You are on your way to join her; why do you hesitate? This evening you will see her; why voluntarily shut yourself up in here? It is her hand, of course it is; her hand summons you, her carriage is ready to go and take you to her. The mystery is now solved: Lothario has two sisters. He knows about my relationship to one of them, but he does not know how much I owe the other. And she doesn't know that the wounded traveler, who owes his recovery, if not his very life, to her, has been received with such unmerited generosity in the house of her brother."

Felix, rocking to and fro down there in the carriage, called up to him: "Father, come down here and look at these beautiful clouds with their lovely colors!" — "I'm coming," said Wilhelm, racing down the stairway. "And let me tell you that the heavenly phenomena you so much admire, are nothing compared to what awaits me!"

While he was seated in the carriage, he went over everything in his mind. "So this Natalie is the friend of Therese! What a discovery, what hopes, what prospects! How strange that my fear of hearing about the one sister had completely obscured the fact that the other existed!" He looked at Felix, full of joy, hoping that he and the boy would be well received.

Evening drew on, the sun went down, the road was not of the best, and so the coachman drove slowly. Felix fell asleep, and new cares and doubts rose in Wilhelm's mind. "What crazy ideas these are that are occupying your mind," he said to himself. "A dubious resemblance of handwriting removes all your doubts and gives rise to the wildest fancy." He took out the letter again, and in the fading light again thought he recognized the countess's hand. His eyes persisted this time in not finding what his heart had been telling him. "So these horses are dragging you toward the most frightful scene! Who knows whether they will not bring you back here in a few hours! And suppose you find her there alone! Suppose her husband is there, or the baroness? Will she be much changed? Shall I be able to remain upright before her gaze?"

Only a vague hope of seeing the Amazon pierced the gloom of these melancholy reflections from time to time. Night had fallen, the carriage rumbled into a courtyard, and halted. A servingman with a wax candle came out through a splendid portal and down a flight of broad steps to the carriage. "We've been expecting you for quite a while," he said, opening the carriage door. Wilhelm stepped out, holding the sleeping Felix in his arms, and the servant called to another man standing in the doorway with a light, saying, "Take this gentlemen straight to the baroness."

In a flash Wilhelm thought to himself: "What luck! The baroness is here, whether by chance or by design. I shall see her first. Perhaps the countess is already sleeping. Kindly protective spirits, grant that this moment of extreme embarrassment may pass without mishap!"

He went into the house, and found himself in the most solemn and, for him, sacred place he had ever seen. A low-hanging lantern gave light to the stairway opposite him, which was wide and rose gradually until it divided into two arms at a landing. There were marble statues and busts standing on pedestals and in niches. Some of them seemed familiar to him. Youthful impressions never fade away entirely. He recognized a muse which had belonged to his grandfather, not by its shape or quality, but because one arm had been restored along with various sections of the drapery. He felt as though he were in a fantasy world. The child began to weigh heavy on him, so he paused and knelt down on the steps, as if to get a better hold of him, but really just to relax a minute. He had difficulty in getting up again. The servant with the light offered to take the child from him, but he did not want to let go of it. They then went into an anteroom where, to his utter amazement, he saw the picture of the sick prince hanging on the wall. He had no time for more than a fleeting glance at it, because the servingman ushered them through a series of rooms into a small chamber where, beneath a lampshade and partly obscured, a woman sat reading. "If only it were she!" he said to himself in this decisive moment. He put down the child who seemed to be waking up, and was about to move toward the woman, when, as the child sank back into sleep, she stood up and came toward him. It was the Amazon! He could not control himself, fell on his knees, and cried: "It is she!" He clasped her hand and kissed it with rapturous delight. The child lay between them both on the carpet, fast asleep.

They lifted him on to the sofa, Natalie sat down beside him and asked Wilhelm to take a seat on a nearby chair. She offered him some refreshment, which he declined, being far too busy making sure that this was really she, looking closer at her features shaded by the lamp and finally deciding for sure that it was. She spoke to him in general terms about Mignon's illness, telling him that the girl was becoming more and more the prey of strong emotions, and, highly sensitive as always, concealed the fact that she often suffered from violent cramps around the heart, but so dangerously severe that sometimes this prime organ of life stopped beating suddenly when she was unexpectedly

excited, and there seemed to be no sign of life in the dear child's body. Once this frightening convulsion had passed, the strength of her nature returned in strong pulse beats which now frightened the child by the intensity of what before had been completely lacking.

Wilhelm remembered one such scene, and Natalie referred him to the doctor, who would explain things further and give the reason why they had summoned the child's friend and protector just now. "You will notice a peculiar change in her; she now wears only women's clothes, which formerly she utterly despised."

"How did you get her to do that?" Wilhelm asked.

"One might say it was pure chance. Let me tell you what happened. You perhaps know that I always have a group of young girls around me with the purpose of encouraging in them, by letting them grow up in close proximity to me, a sense of what is good and right. From me they never hear anything that is not true, but I cannot prevent them—nor would I wish to—from acquiring from others errors and prejudices current in the world at large. If they ask me about these, I try my best to show the difference between such undesirable ideas and what, for me, are correct attitudes, so that these errors, though never useful, may at least not become harmful to them. Recently my girls had been hearing from some peasant children about angels, and about Santa Claus and the Christ Child, who come every now and then to reward good children and punish the naughty ones. The girls suspected that these were real persons dressed up; I encouraged them in this belief and, without offering any explanation, decided to organize such a spectacle on the first appropriate occasion. It so happened that two of them, twin sisters and always well behaved, had a birthday coming; I promised them that an angel would bring the presents they had so well deserved. They looked forward to this with great excitement. I chose Mignon to play the part of the angel, and on the appointed day, she was clothed in a long, thin white garment with a girdle of gold around her chest and a golden crown in her hair. I first thought I would omit the wings, but the women who dressed her insisted on a pair of big golden wings with which she could demonstrate her skill. And so this miraculous vision appeared, a lily in one hand and a little basket in the other, right in the midst of the girls, and surprised me as well. "Here comes the angel!" I said. All the children made as if to withdraw, but then finally shouted: "It's Mignon!" though still not venturing any closer to the wondrous sight.

"'Here are your presents,' she said, handing them the basket. They gathered around her, gazed, touched her, and then one of them asked: 'Are you an angel?' 'I wish I were,' Mignon replied. 'Why are you holding a lily?' 'My heart should be open and pure as a lily, then I would be happy.' 'What are the wings for? Let me see!' 'They stand for lovelier wings which are not yet opened.'

"She continued to give these remarkable answers to their simple questions. When their curiosity was satisfied and the first impressions of her appearance began to fade, they wanted to undress her. But she would not allow this. She

took up her zither, climbed up on this high desk, and sang with unbelievable grace and appeal this song:

So let me seem till I become:
Take not this garment white from me!
I hasten from the joys of earth
Down to that house so fast and firm.

There will I rest in peace a while,
Till opens wide my freshened glance.
Then I will cast my dress aside.
Leaving both wreath and girdle there.

For all those glorious heavenly forms,
They do not ask for man or wife,
No garments long or draperies fine
Surround the body now transformed.

I lived indeed untouched by care.
And yet I felt deep sorrow there,
Sorrow has made me old too soon,
Now make me young for ever more!

"I decided immediately," Natalie went on, "to let her keep the dress, and had others made that were similar. These she is now wearing, and in them, it seems to me, her whole being appears quite different."

Since it was already late, Natalie bade Wilhelm leave, which he did in a state of some anxiety. "Is she married, or not?" he wondered. When he heard a noise he feared that a door might open and a husband come in. The servant who conducted him to his room, left him before he had summoned up the courage to ask about Natalie's circumstances. His uncertainty kept him awake for a time, which he spent comparing the image of the Amazon with his new friend. The two would not coalesce: the former had been fashioned, as it were, by him, the latter seemed almost to be refashioning him.

Chapter Three

The next morning, while everything was still peaceful and quiet, he walked around looking at the house. The building had clean lines and was the finest and noblest he had ever seen. "Good art," he said to himself, "is like good society: it obliges us, in the most pleasing way, to recognize form and limitations like those which govern our being." His grandfather's statues and busts gave him unusual pleasure. He returned eagerly to the picture of the sick prince, still finding it as moving and affecting as ever. The servant opened the doors to several other rooms: there was a library, a collection of natural history specimens, and another of stones and metals. He felt quite strange, standing

in front of all these objects. Felix had by now woken up and was following him around. Wilhelm was concerned to know when and how he would receive a reply from Therese. He felt some trepidation at seeing Mignon—also, in a way, at seeing Natalie. How different his present mood was from when he sent the letter to Therese, joyfully entrusting his whole self to such a noble being!

Natalie asked him to come to breakfast. He went into a room where several neatly dressed girls, all apparently less than ten years old, were laying the table while an older person was bringing various beverages.

Wilhelm's attention was drawn to a picture that hung over the sofa. He took it for a portrait of Natalie, but not a very satisfying one. At this point she entered the room, and the resemblance seemed to disappear entirely. However, he noticed that she was wearing the cross of some order, just like the woman in the picture.

"I've been looking at that portrait," he said, "and am amazed that the artist could be so true and so false at the same time. It is a good general likeness of you, a very good one really, but it does not capture either your features or your character."

"What is still more amazing," Natalie replied, "is that it is such a good likeness, for it is not a picture of me, but of an aunt who, even as an old lady, resembled me as a child. It was painted when she was about the age I am now, and most people, when they first see it, think it is a picture of me. I wish you had known this splendid person, for I am indebted to her for so much. Her delicate health, along with perhaps too much concern about herself, and in addition an extreme moral and religious reserve, prevented her from becoming for the world what, in other circumstances, she might well have been. She was a light that shone on just a few friends—and especially brightly on me."

"Can it be possible," said Wilhelm after a moment's reflection on how strangely so many different circumstances seemed to be combining in this moment, "can it be possible, that the noble, beautiful soul whose private confessions I was privileged to read, was your aunt?"

"You have read what she wrote?" asked Natalie.

"Yes, I have!" said Wilhelm. "I did so with sympathetic understanding and it has had a great effect on the course of my life. What emerged for me most clearly was, I would say, the purity of her life and of everything that surrounded her, her independent spirit and her inability to make anything part of herself which did not conform to her noble loving nature."

"You are more liberal and more just toward her fine character than many others who have read her manuscript. Every cultured person knows how hard one has to struggle with a certain degree of coarseness in oneself and others, how costly self-cultivation is, and how often one thinks solely of oneself and forgets what one owes to others. Every good human being reproaches himself occasionally for not having acted gently enough; and yet if such a fine person becomes too gentle, too considerate, too cultivated, if you will, the world shows no tolerance, and no consideration for what such a person is. Persons

like her are outside us what ideals are inside us, models not to be imitated, but to be striven after. People laugh at the cleanliness of Dutch women, but would my friend Therese be what she is, if she did not have some such ideal of cleanliness in her mind when she is engaged in domestic activities?"

"So you, Natalie, are the friend of Therese to whom she is so devoted, the precious relative who, as a young girl and since, has always been so affectionate, sympathetic, and helpful! A person like you could only come from such a family, and now that I know your heritage and the whole circle you belong to, I feel immense vistas opening up before me!"

"Indeed," said Natalie, "you could not have been better informed about us all than from my aunt's account. One must admit that her affection for me presumed too much good in me as a child, but when one talks about children, it is one's hopes for them rather than what they actually are which one has in mind."

Wilhelm was now informed about Lothario's origins and early youth. He could picture the charming countess as the child with her aunt's pearls around her neck. And he had been so near these pearls when her delicate, loving lips had pressed themselves on his. He tried to dispel these memories with other thoughts. He ran through all the people he had become acquainted with from the manuscript. "So here I am," he declared, "in the house of that remarkable uncle; yet, it isn't a house, it's a temple, and you are its noble priestess, indeed, its presiding genius. I shall remember all my life the impression I had yesterday evening when I came in here, and there in front of me were those old treasures from my youth—there once more. I remembered the sorrowing statues in Mignon's song; but these objects have no need to sorrow for me, they looked at me in solemn seriousness, linking my earliest memories to this present moment. Here I have rediscovered the family treasures, the joys of my grandfather, set between so many other noble works of art. And I, whom nature made the favorite child of that good old man, I, unworthy as I am, find myself in such worthy company, such a wealth of relationships!"

The young girls had left the room one by one, in order to get on with their various jobs. Now that he was alone with Natalie, Wilhelm had to offer some explanation of what he had just been saying. The discovery that a notable part of these works of art had belonged to his grandfather, put him in a cheerful, sociable mood. The manuscript had made him acquainted with this house, and he now found himself reunited with his own inheritance. He wanted to see Mignon, but Natalie asked him to be patient and wait until the doctor, who had been summoned away to somewhere in the neighborhood, should return. It will come as no surprise that this was the same busy little man whom we already know, the same we met in the *Confessions of a Beautiful Soul*.

"Well, here I am in the midst of your family," said Wilhelm, "and so I suppose that the Abbé who is mentioned in your aunt's narrative, is that strange, mysterious man whom I rediscovered after a train of peculiar circumstances in your brother's house? Perhaps you would give me some more information about him?"

To this Natalie replied: "There would be a great deal to say about him. What I am best informed about, is his influence on our education. He was convinced, at least for a time, that all education should build on inclination. What his present opinion is, I do not know. He used to say that the most important thing is to be active, but one cannot engage in any activity without the necessary predisposition or the instinct impelling us in that direction. 'It is agreed,' he would say, 'that poets are born, not made; and this claim is made for all the arts. But if one considers the matter more closely, we are only born with minimal ability, and there is no such thing as indeterminate ability. It is only our piecemeal, vague education that makes us uncertain of ourselves; it arouses desires rather than active impulses, and instead of helping to develop predispositions, it directs our activity toward objects, which are often out of line with the minds that are so taken up with them. A child or young person who goes astray on his chosen path is, in my opinion, preferable to many of those who pursue uncongenial paths. When the former do find the right path, either by themselves or under direction, it will be the path suited to their nature, and they will never depart from it; but the latter will constantly be in danger of casting off an alien yoke and abandoning themselves to complete freedom of action.'"

"It is strange that this extraordinary man has taken an interest in me too," said Wilhelm, "and if he has not precisely guided me according to his fashion, he has at least encouraged me for a time in my mistakes. How he will in future account for the fact that, in company with several others, he has almost made a fool of me, is something that I can only wait patiently to discover."

"I can't complain about this peculiarity of his, if indeed it is a peculiarity," said Natalie. "For, of all my siblings, I am the one who has least suffered from it. I cannot imagine that my brother Lothario could have been better educated. Perhaps my dear sister, the countess, might have been treated differently—they could have tried to give more seriousness and strength to her character. And what is to become of my brother Friedrich, I haven't the least idea. I'm afraid that he may well be the victim of these pedagogical experiments."

"So you have a second brother?" said Wilhelm.

"Yes I do," she replied, "and he is the merriest, most lighthearted creature. Since he has never been prevented from wandering about the world, I do not know what will come from his frivolous, carefree nature. I haven't seen him for a long while. My only consolation is that the Abbé and all my brother's friends always know where he is and what he is doing."

Wilhelm was about to inquire further of Natalie about these paradoxes, and try to obtain more information about the secret society, when at that very moment the doctor came into the room and, having greeted them briefly, began to talk about the condition of Mignon. Natalie took Felix by the hand, saying that she would bring him to Mignon and prepare her for Wilhelm's coming.

The doctor, now that he and Wilhelm were alone, began as follows: "What I have to tell you, is stranger than you could possibly expect. Natalie has given

us an opportunity to speak openly about matters that I have learnt only from her but which cannot be discussed freely in her presence. What we are concerned with is the strange personality of that dear child Mignon. It consists almost entirely of a deep sort of yearning: the longing to see her motherland again, and a longing, my friend, for you—these, I may say, are the only earthly things about her, and both of them have an element of infinite distance about them, both goals being inaccessible to her unusual nature. She may have come originally from near Milan. She was taken from her parents when she was very young by a company of acrobats. No further details could be ascertained from her, partly because she was too young at the time to remember exact names and locations, and partly because she made a vow never again to reveal her home and origins to a living soul. For she did give an exact account of her home to the persons who found her wandering about, begging them earnestly to take her back there, but they dragged her away with them and joked at night, when they thought she was asleep, about the good catch they had made, resolving that she should never be allowed to find her way back. The poor creature was overcome by utter despair, in the midst of which the Mother of God appeared to her and promised to take care of her. So she swore a sacred oath that she would never again trust anyone, never tell anyone her story, and live and die in the expectation of direct divine sustenance. What I have been telling you, was not something she conveyed in so many words to Natalie, but what Natalie has pieced together from occasional remarks, from songs and childish indiscretions which revealed what they intended to keep secret.”

Wilhelm could now account for many a song, many an utterance of the poor girl. He beseeched his friend not to withhold from him anything else that he had gathered from the songs and confessions of this extraordinary child.

“Well then,” said the doctor, “be prepared for a strange revelation concerning an event in which you had an important part, though you may not remember, and which, I fear, became decisive for the life and death of this dear creature.”

“I am very eager to hear about it,” said Wilhelm.

“Do you remember the night after the performance of *Hamlet* when you had a mysterious female visitor?”

“Of course I do,” said Wilhelm with some embarrassment, “but I wasn’t expecting to be reminded of that at this particular moment.”

“Do you know who it was?”

“You scare me! Surely not Mignon? Who was it then? Tell me!”

“I do not know myself.”

“Not Mignon, then?”

“Certainly not! But: Mignon was on the point of coming to you secretly, when with horror she observed from a corner that a rival had anticipated her.”

“A rival!” exclaimed Wilhelm. “Do go on. You are completely bewildering me.”

"Be thankful," said the doctor, "that you shall quickly learn what we found out. Natalie and I, though only indirectly involved, were greatly distressed by the troubled state of the girl whom we desired to help, until we obtained some clearer insight. From some frivolous remarks of Philine and the other girls, as well as from a certain song, Mignon conceived the idea of how delightful it would be to spend a night with her beloved, without any further thought than fond, peaceful nestling. Her affection for you, my friend, was so strong; she had already recovered from many a sorrow in your arms, and now she wanted to enjoy her happiness to the full. Her first impulse was to ask you quietly, but inner anxiety made her desist from that. It was the hilarity of the evening and the mood induced by frequent drafts of wine that finally gave her the courage to creep up to your room that night. She went ahead in order to conceal herself in your room, which was not locked, and had just ascended the staircase when she heard a noise. She took cover, and saw a woman in white enter your room. Then you yourself arrived and she heard you bolt the door.

"Mignon was deeply distressed. Violent jealousy combined with the unrecognized urgency of latent desire to take its toll of her only half-developed nature. Her heart, which up till then had been beating with expectation and yearning, suddenly stopped. It was like a dead weight, she could not breathe, she didn't know what to do. Then she heard the sound of the old man's harp, rushed to his room, and spent the night at his feet, in terrible convulsions."

The doctor paused for a moment, but since Wilhelm remained silent, he went on: "Natalie assures me that nothing scared her so much in her whole life as when the child told her all this. In fact, she reproached herself for eliciting by her questions these confidences and so cruelly reviving the memory of all that the dear child had suffered. Natalie told me that when the girl reached this point in her story, she suddenly fell down at her feet, clasped her breast and complained that the pain of that terrible night had come back again. She rolled about on the ground, and Natalie had to concentrate all her efforts on deciding, and using, the best means she knew of dealing with such a state of mind and body."

"You put me in a very painful position by making me feel my injustice toward the poor creature, just at the moment when I am to see her again," said Wilhelm. "If I am to see her again, why do you take away from me the courage to meet her freely and openly? And how can my being here help her if she is in that state of mind? Are you convinced, as a doctor, that the twofold yearning you have described has so undermined her nature that she is in danger of dying? If that is the case, why should I aggravate her misery by my presence and perhaps bring on her death?"

"My dear friend!" the doctor replied, "even if we cannot help, we have an obligation to appease. And I know several notable instances where the physical presence of what one loves can relieve the imagination of its destructive tendencies and transform longing into calm contemplation. Everything should be undertaken with moderation and purpose. For it is also possible that such

encounters may revive flagging emotions. Go and see her, be kind to her, and let's see what happens."

Natalie came back into the room and asked Wilhelm to accompany her to Mignon. "She seems to be quite happy with Felix, and I hope she will also be pleased to see you," she said. Wilhelm followed her with some trepidation: He was deeply disturbed by what he had heard and was afraid of a highly emotional scene. But when he arrived, he found exactly the opposite.

Mignon, in a long white dress, her thick brown hair partly hanging loose and partly arranged, was seated with Felix on her lap, pressing him to her breast. She looked like a departed spirit, and the boy like life itself: it seemed as though heaven and earth were here conjoined. She smiled and, stretching out her hand to Wilhelm, said: "Thank you for bringing back the child. You stole it from me, I don't know how. And since then I could not live. As long as my heart has any needs on earth, this child shall fill them."

The tranquillity with which Mignon greeted Wilhelm was a source of great satisfaction to the rest of the company. The doctor insisted that Wilhelm should go and see her often, and that they should all try to restore her physical and mental equilibrium. He himself departed, but promised to return soon.

Wilhelm was now able to observe Natalie in her own environment. One could not imagine anything better, he thought, than living in her proximity. Her presence had a most salutary influence not only on the young girls but on women of various ages, some of whom lived in her house and others came to visit her from nearby.

One day Wilhelm said to her: "The course of your life seems always to have been very even. For the description your aunt gave of you as a child still seems to be apposite. One feels that you never lost your path; you were never obliged to take a step backward."

"For that I am indebted to my uncle and to the Abbé," said Natalie, "for they had such a clear sense of my personal inclinations. I remember that the strongest impression of my youth was that of human need everywhere; and I had an irresistible urge to do something about this. A child that could not yet stand on its feet or an old man who could no longer do so, a rich family's longing to have children or a poor family's inability to support theirs, one man's search for a trade and another's to develop some talent—all such situations were what I seemed by nature predisposed to discover. I saw things that nobody directed my attention to; I saw them because I seemed born to do so. The delights of inanimate nature, so meaningful to others, left me unmoved, and art appealed to me even less. My greatest delight was, and still is, to be presented with some deficiency, some need in others, and be able to think of some way of repairing or alleviating it.

"If I saw someone poor and in rags, I thought of the unnecessary garments hanging in the closets of my friends. If I saw children languishing for lack of care and attention, I remembered this or that woman consumed by boredom in the midst of wealth and comfort. If I saw a crowd of people crammed into

a tiny room, I thought how they might be better housed in the vast halls of many a fine residence. This way of seeing things came quite naturally to me; I never had to think twice about it, and I sometimes did the oddest things as a child, embarrassing people on more than one occasion by the strangest requests. Another peculiarity of mine was that I rarely thought of money, and then only later as the means to satisfy needs; my generosity consisted in the giving of natural objects, and I know I was often laughed at for this. The Abbé was the only one who seemed to understand me, and he assisted me by making me better acquainted with myself, my desires and inclinations, and by teaching me the most effective way of fulfilling these."

"Did you, in the instruction of your women charges, carry out the principles of these extraordinary men?" asked Wilhelm. "Do you allow each human being to develop by itself? Do you let them search and lose their way, make mistakes, and either happily reach their goal or lose themselves miserably in the process?"

"No, I do not," said Natalie. "To treat people thus would be quite contrary to my convictions. If someone does not provide help when it is needed, he will, to my mind, never be of any help; if he does not come up with advice immediately, he will never provide any. It seems to me of the utmost importance to enunciate certain principles and inculcate these into children— principles that will give their lives some stability. I would almost be inclined to say that it is better to err because of principles than to do so from arbitrariness of nature, and my observation of human beings tells me that there is always some gap in their natures which can only be filled by a principle expressly communicated to them."

"Your procedure, then, is radically different from that followed by our friends?" said Wilhelm.

"Yes it is!" Natalie replied. "But you should respect their tolerance in letting me go my own way, just because it is my own."

We will postpone a more detailed account of how Natalie operated with the children under her supervision.

Mignon constantly asked to join the company, which was gladly permitted because she was gradually becoming accustomed to Wilhelm again, opening up her heart to him and generally seeming to be recovering her good spirits and her love of life. She liked to put her arm in his as they walked, for she easily got tired. "Well," she would say, "Mignon can't jump and climb anymore, but she still feels the urge to walk over the tops of mountains, from one house to another, from one tree to the next. How I envy the birds, especially when they are building their nests nicely and quietly."

Mignon frequently took occasion to ask Wilhelm to go with her into the garden. If he was busy or somehow not to be found, Felix had to take his place, and if the girl seemed at times quite detached from the earth, there were others when she clung to father and son, fearing more than anything that she might be separated from them.

Natalie seemed puzzled and concerned. "We have tried," she said, "to open up her poor dear heart by bringing you here; but whether we did right, I do not know." She stopped, and seemed to be waiting for Wilhelm to say something. It occurred to him that, as things were at present, Mignon would be greatly upset if he married Therese, but he was uncertain whether he should mention what he had in mind to Natalie. He did not suspect that she knew about it already.

He also could not listen with an open mind when she spoke about her sister, praising her good qualities and lamenting her situation. And he was quite ill at ease when she announced the impending arrival of the countess. "Her husband," she said, "has now only one thought in his head; he is determined to take over the position of the late Count Zinzendorf in the community, and support and develop that great undertaking by his insight and activity. He is coming here with his wife to take a sort of leave from us. He will then visit the various places where the community has established its settlements. It seems that his intentions are generally approved of; and it could be that he will venture on a journey to America with my poor sister, so as to emulate his predecessor. Since he seems almost convinced that he lacks little to acquire sainthood, he may be inspired as well by the desire to be a shining martyr."

Chapter Four

They had often talked about Therese, or mentioned her in passing, and time and time again Wilhelm was about to tell Natalie that he had offered his heart and his hand to that excellent woman. But he was restrained from doing so by a certain feeling, which he could not account for. He hesitated so long that Natalie, with that radiant, serene, and gentle smile so characteristic of her, finally said to him: "So it is I who must eventually break the silence and force my way into your confidence. Why, my friend, do you keep secret from me a matter that is so important to you, and also affects me closely? You have offered your hand to my friend Therese. I am not willfully interfering in your affairs, here is my justification—here is the letter she has written to you and sends you through me."

"A letter from Therese!" he cried.

"Yes! And your fate is decided. You are a happy man. Allow me to congratulate both you and my friend."

Wilhelm lapsed into silence, staring in front of him. Natalie looked at him, noticing that he had turned pale. "Your happiness is so extreme," she said, "that it has taken the form of fright and robbed you of speech. My pleasure is not less because it still permits me to speak. I hope you will be grateful when I tell you that my influence on Therese's decision was not inconsiderable. She asked for my advice, and strangely enough you were here at the time. I was easily able to dispel the few doubts she still had as messengers went quickly

back and forth between us. Here is her decision! Here's the solution! And now you shall read all her letters and look freely and directly into her noble heart."

Wilhelm opened the letter, which she handed to him unsealed, and read these kindly words:

"I am yours—just as I am, and as you know me. And I shall call you mine—just as you are, and as I know you. Whatever is changed by marriage in us and our relationship, we will accept with good will, intelligence and happy hearts. Since it is not passion, but mutual inclination and trust that brings us together, we run a lesser risk than thousands of others. You will surely forgive me if I sometimes still think about my former friend; and I, for my part, will clasp your son to my bosom as a mother. If you would like to share my little house with me right now, you shall be lord and master, and that will give time for the purchase of the estate to be concluded. I do not want any changes to be made in the estate without me, so that I may show that I deserve the trust you are placing in me. May things fare well with you, my dear, dear friend! Beloved bridegroom, honored spouse! Therese clasps you to her heart in hope and joy. My friend Natalie will tell you more—indeed everything."

Wilhelm, for whom this letter revived his whole image of Therese, had by now completely recovered himself. As he read, various thoughts were coursing through his mind. With some alarm he became aware of definite signs of a growing affection for Natalie within him; he reproved himself, terming all such thoughts pure madness, recalled Therese in all her perfection, read the letter again, brightened up—or rather recovered sufficiently to appear bright. Natalie then showed him the other letters from which we will select some passages.

Therese, having described Wilhelm in her own fashion, had gone on to say: "This is how I see the man who is offering me his hand. How he sees himself, will become clear to you when you read the frank account he has given me of himself. I am convinced I will be happy with him."

"As far as social status is concerned, you know what my opinions have always been. Some persons suffer acutely from disparity in external conditions and cannot adjust to this. I never try to convince anybody, but I act according to my own convictions. I never try to set an example, though I do myself act according to an example. It is only disparities in inner conditions that trouble me, vessels unsuited to what they are to contain, external show without inner satisfaction, riches combined with miserliness, nobility with vulgarity, youth with pedantry, neediness with ceremoniousness. Such combinations are enough to destroy me completely, no matter what the world calls them or how it values them."

"When I say that I have hopes we will suit each other, my belief is based primarily on his similarity to you, dear Natalie, whom I treasure and respect so greatly. Like you he has that noble seeking and striving for betterment which enables us to do good where we think we perceive the possibility. I have often blamed you in my mind for treating this or that person differently

and reacting to this or that situation differently from how I would have; and yet the outcome usually showed you were right. 'If we just take people as they are,' you once said, 'we make them worse; but if we treat them not as they are but as they should be, we help them to become what they can become.' I can't think or act like that—this I know all too well. Insight, order, discipline, commands—that is my way. I remember Jarno once saying to me: 'Therese trains her pupils, whereas Natalie cultivates hers.' He even went so far as to deny me completely the three primary virtues of faith, love, and hope. 'Instead of faith,' he said, 'she has insight; instead of love, persistence; instead of hope, confidence.' Before I met you, I believed there was nothing of greater value than clarity and common sense, but knowing you has convinced me, given me new life, overcome my previous belief, and now I yield the palm to your finer, loftier spirit. I respect my friend Wilhelm in the same terms. His life has been continuous searching and failure to find. But his searching has not been just idle seeking; it is sustained by the well-intentioned but curious belief that he will receive from without what can only come from within. And so, my dear, this time my belief in the importance of clarity has been beneficial to me, for I know my future husband better than he does, and respect him all the more for that. I see him, but I do not oversee him, and all my powers of insight do not suffice to estimate what he is capable of achieving. When I think about him, his image is always merging with yours; and I do not know how I have deserved the association with two such remarkable people. But I will try to deserve this by doing my duty in fulfilling what is expected and anticipated from me."

"Whether I ever think about Lothario? A great deal, and every day of my life. He is never absent from my mind. How sorry I am that, related to me by an error of his youth, this excellent man should also be so closely related to you. For someone like yourself would be more worthy of him than I. I could and would gladly let him be yours. Let us be everything to him that we possibly can, until he finds a suitable wife, and even then let us remain together as close friends."

"Now, what will our friends have to say?" Natalie began. "Your brother knows nothing about it?" Wilhelm asked. "No more than your family does," she replied. "This time the whole thing was a matter between us women. I don't know what ideas Lydie has put into Therese's head, for she seems to mistrust both the Abbé and Jarno. Lydie has made her somehow mistrust certain secret plans and arrangements of theirs, which I know about in a general way but have never involved myself with, and so, at this decisive point in her life, Therese sought no other opinion than mine. She had agreed with my brother that when either of them got married, they would simply announce this without seeking each other's advice beforehand."

Natalie thereupon wrote to her brother, inviting Wilhelm to add a few words, as Therese had asked her to do. They were just about to seal the letter

when Jarno unexpectedly arrived. He was received very warmly, seemed extremely cheerful and jocular, and finally said: "I have actually come here today to bring you the strangest piece of news, though a very pleasant one. It concerns our friend Therese. You have often blamed us, Natalie, for busying ourselves with so many different things; but now you will see how useful it is to have spies everywhere. Guess what has happened—and let's see how sagacious you are!"

He said this in a very self-satisfied way, and his malicious expression as he looked at both Wilhelm and Natalie led them to believe that their secret was discovered. Natalie smiled and said: "We are much more skillful than you think, for we have put the solution to the riddle on paper before you told us what the riddle was."

She then handed him the letter to Lothario, pleased by this means to be able to counter the surprise and embarrassment he had prepared for them. Jarno received the letter with some amazement, skimmed it through, was astonished, let it fall from his hands, and looked at them both wide-eyed, with an expression of stupefaction, indeed of horror, such as one was not used to with him. He did not say one word.

Wilhelm and Natalie were distinctly puzzled. Jarno paced back and forth in the room. "What am I to say?" he exclaimed. "Shall I tell them? It can't remain a secret, and some confusion is unavoidable. All right: a secret in exchange for a secret! Surprise for surprise! Therese is not her mother's daughter! The obstacle is removed. I have come here to ask you to prepare her for union with Lothario."

Jarno observed the consternation of both of them. Their faces dropped. "This is one of those cases that is difficult to tolerate socially," he said. "Whatever we may all think, we would best pursue our thoughts in private. I at least will ask for an hour's respite." He hurried off into the garden. Wilhelm followed him instinctively, but at a distance.

After about an hour they met again. Wilhelm was the first to speak, and said: "While I was living an easy, one might say frivolous life, friendship, love, affection and trust came to me with open arms, pressed themselves upon me; but now, when things are serious, fate seems to be taking a different course with me. My decision to offer Therese my hand in marriage was perhaps the first that came to me entirely from within myself. I made my decision after careful consideration, my mind was completely made up, and my fondest hopes were fulfilled by her acceptance. But now the strangest turn of fate casts down my outstretched hand, Therese extends hers from afar, as in a dream, and my whole image of bliss is gone forever. Farewell then, beautiful image, and with you all those happy scenes I had associated with you!"

He stopped for a moment, stared in front of him, and Jarno was about to speak. "Let me just say something else," Wilhelm added, "for at this moment my whole destiny is being decided. I remember now the first impression I had of Lothario, an impression that is still firmly planted in my mind. That man

deserves every sort of friendship and affection, and no friendship is conceivable without readiness to sacrifice. For his sake it was easy for me to fool an unhappy girl; therefore it should also be possible for me to renounce the worthiest of brides for his sake. Go to him and tell him the whole extraordinary story; and tell him what I am prepared to do."

Jarno answered: "In such instances as this, I think the ultimate solution is not to act too hastily. Let's do nothing without Lothario's approval. I will go to him, but you stay here quietly and wait either for my return or a letter from him."

He rode off, leaving Wilhelm and Natalie in a melancholy mood. They now had time to look at the situation from various angles and make some observations to each other. First of all, it struck them as strange that they had heard this extraordinary news from Jarno, but had not inquired about the circumstances surrounding it. Wilhelm even began to have some doubts about it; and the next day their astonishment and bewilderment were raised to a peak when a messenger arrived from Therese with this peculiar letter to Natalie: "Strange as it may seem, I must follow up on my last letter immediately and ask you to send Wilhelm to me as quickly as possible. He shall be my husband, no matter what plans others are making to steal him away from me. Give him the enclosed letter! And in private, no matter who else is at your house."

The letter to Wilhelm ran as follows: "What can you be thinking of your Therese pressing suddenly and passionately for an immediate union, whereas it was initiated in such cool consideration? Let nothing stop you from coming here instantly on receiving this letter. Come, my dear, dear friend, my thrice beloved, for they are trying to rob me of having you, or at least making that difficult."

"What is to be done?" exclaimed Wilhelm after reading the letter.

"Never," said Natalie after some thought, "have my heart and my mind maintained such silence. I don't know what to do, or what to advise you to do."

"Could it be possible," exclaimed Wilhelm somewhat angrily, "that Lothario himself knows nothing about this, or if he does, that he and we are the victims of some secret machinations? Did Jarno, when he read our letter, make the whole thing up on the spur of the moment? Would he have told us something else if we had not been so precipitate? What do they want? What are they up to? What plan is Therese referring to? It can't be denied that Lothario is surrounded by secret activities and alliances. I myself have experienced such activities, and learnt that these persons are trying to influence and control the actions, the whole lives of others. I do not understand what the ultimate goal of these clandestine operations is, but this latest attempt to separate me from Therese is clear enough. On the one hand I am regaled with the good fortune awaiting Lothario, though perhaps that is only a pretense; on the other hand I find my beloved, my honored bride urgently calling me to come to her. What shall I do? What shall I leave undone?"

"Just have a little patience," said Natalie, "just take a little time for reflection. In this strange concatenation of circumstances there is one thing I am certain about: We should not act hastily, when what is at stake is irrecoverable. Our defense against idle fictions and secret machinations is to be sensible and maintain patience, for everything will soon be cleared up, and we shall know whether there is any truth in all this or not. If my brother really has hopes now of being united with Therese, it would be cruel to deprive him of that happiness in the very moment it seems so inviting. Let us therefore wait and see whether he knows anything about it, whether he really believes it, and has hopes."

A letter arrived from Lothario which fortunately added further justification to her advice. "I am not sending Jarno back to you," he wrote. "A few words from me will mean more to you than all those of an intermediary. I am quite sure that Therese is not her mother's daughter, and I cannot abandon hope of winning her until she herself is also convinced and can make a considered choice between me and our friend. Don't, I beg you, let him leave you; a brother's happiness, his whole life, is in the balance. I promise you that this state of uncertainty will not continue much longer."

"You see how things stand," said Natalie gently to Wilhelm. "Give me your word that you will not leave the house."

"I will not leave this house against your will," he said, extending his hand to her. "I thank God and my good angel that this time I am being guided, and by you."

Natalie wrote to Therese telling her all that had happened, assuring her she would not let Wilhelm leave, and enclosing Lothario's letter.

Therese replied: "I am quite surprised that Lothario is convinced. He would not pretend that he was, to his sister, not to this extent anyway. I am very upset, and it is best if I say nothing further, but come to you as soon as I have provided for poor Lydie, who is being cruelly treated. I fear we are all being deceived, and in such a manner that we shall never straighten things out. If Wilhelm thought as I do, he would slip away from you and throw himself on the bosom of his Therese, whom no one would then deprive him of; but I am afraid I shall lose him, and yet not regain Lothario. They are snatching Lydie away from Lothario by giving him the distant hope of winning me. I won't say any more; the confusion will get worse. Time alone will decide whether good relationships are becoming so twisted, so undermined, even destroyed, that once everything is cleared up, it will be too late to repair them. If my friend Wilhelm does not break loose, I will come in a few days to see him at your house and keep him there. You will be surprised at such passion taking hold of your Therese; but it is not passion, it is the conviction that, since Lothario could not be mine, this new friend will make my life happy. Tell him this on behalf of the little boy who sat beneath the oaktree with him and cherished his affection! Tell him in the name of Therese, who received his proposal with such honest delight! My first dream—living together with Lothario—is now

far removed from my mind; my dream of a life with my new friend is, however, everpresent in it. Have they so little respect for me that they believe it is so easy to exchange one for the other again, on the spur of the moment?"

"I trust you not to run away," said Natalie to Wilhelm, handing him Therese's letter. "Do realize that my whole happiness lies in your hands. My life is so intensely bound up with that of my brother, that when he suffers pain, so do I, and the joys he experiences are what gives me happiness. I can truly say that only through him have I learnt that the heart can be moved and uplifted, that there is joy and love in the world, and feeling which brings contentment beyond all need . . ."

She paused; and Wilhelm took her hand and said: "Do go on! This is the time for confiding in each other. We have never needed more urgently to know each other better."

"Yes, my friend," she said with a smile of indescribably gentle and calm dignity. "And perhaps it will not be the wrong time to tell you that what we read in books about love, and what the world shows us of what it calls love, has always seemed to me idle fancy."

"You have never been in love?" Wilhelm asked.

"Never—or always!" she replied.

Chapter Five

They had been walking to and fro in the garden as they talked. Natalie had picked various strangely shaped flowers quite unfamiliar to Wilhelm, and he asked her for their names.

"You will never guess for whom I am picking these. My little bouquet is for my uncle, whom we are going to visit. The sun is shining so brightly on the Hall of the Past, that I would like to take you there. And I never go without taking some of the flowers my uncle particularly liked. He was a strange man with strong inclinations of his own. He had a decided affection for certain plants and animals, people and places, even stones, and this was often not easy to account for. 'If I had not resisted myself from youth on,' he would say, 'if I had not striven to extend my mind outward from myself into wider vistas, I would have become a very constricted and thoroughly insufferable person. For nothing is more unbearable than isolation and idiosyncrasy in someone who could be expected to indulge in some unselfish, useful activity.' Yet he had to admit also that life would lose its savor if he did not sometimes consider himself and passionately indulge in what he could not always approve of or make excuses for. 'It is not my fault,' he used to say, 'if I have not completely been able to harmonize my mind with my instincts.' He would make fun of me, and say: 'Natalie can truly be said to be in a state of bliss on this earth, for her nature never demands anything but what the world desires and needs.'"

They had now arrived. She conducted him through a wide corridor up to a portal guarded by two granite sphinxes. The portal itself was narrower at the

top than at the bottom, after the Egyptian fashion, and its solid iron doors led one to expect a somber, perhaps gruesome, interior. It was therefore a pleasant surprise to find this gloomy anticipation replaced by a world of brightness and light, when one entered a hall in which art and life dispelled all thoughts of death and the grave. Arches were inset in the walls and in them stood large sarcophagi. In the pillars between them there were niches with funeral urns and caskets. The remaining surface of the walls and the vault were divided up into regular spaces, and bright, imposing figures painted on backgrounds of various sizes, surrounded by a whole variety of bright borders, garlands and other decorative motifs. The architectural elements were fashioned from fine yellow marble, which shaded over into reddishness, blue stripes of an ingenious chemical composition reproduced the effect of lapis lazuli, and, pleasing the eye by the contrast, gave coherence and unity to the whole. All this splendor and decoration was achieved by purely architectural means, and everyone who entered felt uplifted by the design of the whole, showing what man is and what he can be.

Across from the entrance, on a magnificent sarcophagus, stood the marble effigy of a distinguished man, his head resting against a pillow. He was holding a scroll in front of him which he appeared to be reading attentively. The scroll was so placed that one could read the words written upon it. These were: *Remember to live.*

Natalie removed some withered flowers from her uncle's tomb (for his it was) and replaced them by those she had brought with her. The effigy was full-length, and Wilhelm thought he recognized the features of the old man he had once seen in the forest. "We used to spend many hours here together," said Natalie, "while the hall was being constructed. In his last years he brought several skilled artists here, and his favorite occupation was to plan and decide on the drawings and cartoons for these paintings."

Wilhelm was overjoyed at everything he saw around him. "What life there is in this Hall of the Past!" he cried. "One could just as well call it the Hall of the Present, and of the Future. This is how everything was, and this is how everything will be. Nothing perishes except him who observes and enjoys. The picture of this mother clasping her child will survive many generations of happy mothers. Some father in a future century will delight in this bearded man casting aside all seriousness and joking with his son. Bashful brides will sit like that for all time, silently asking to be consoled and persuaded; impatient like this one, all bridegrooms will stand, listening to find out when they may enter."

Wilhelm's eyes wandered from one picture to another. In a splendid sequence of vivid representations, ranging from the first childish impulses to employ all one's limbs in play, to the calm, grave detachment of wise old age, showing that there is no inclination or faculty innate in man that he does not need or use. From that first delicate awakening of self with which the maiden delays drawing water while she gazes admiringly at her own reflection, to the grand festivities at which kings and nations call on the gods to sanction their

alliances—everything was there in all its power and significance. A whole world, heaven itself, surrounded the observer in this place, and aside from the thoughts and feelings aroused by these images, something else seemed to be there that took hold of the whole man. Wilhelm felt it without being able to account for it. “What is it,” he cried, “that, apart from all meaning, aside from the sympathetic interest that all human events and fortunes evoke in us, what is it that affects me so strongly and at the same time so pleasantly? It speaks to me from the whole without my comprehending the whole, and from each of the parts without my being able to relate these especially to myself! What is the magic that for me pervades these surfaces, lines, height and breadth, masses and colors? What is it that makes these shapes, even though only decoration, so appealing? That one could remain here, reflect on all one sees, be happy, and yet feel and think things quite different from what one sees with one’s eyes.”

If we could only describe how admirably everything was arranged, how everything appeared as it should, by combination or contrast, uniformity or variety of color, and thereby produced a perfect as well as clear effect—if we could do that, we would be transporting the reader to a place he would never wish to leave.

Four large marble candelabras stood in the corners of the Hall, and four smaller ones in the center were ranged around a sarcophagus of exquisite workmanship which, from its size, would seem to have contained the body of a young person of medium height. Natalie stood for a while beside this monument and, placing her hand upon it, said: “My dear uncle had a special love for this classical work. He often said that it is not only the first fruits that wither—and can be preserved up there in those smaller spaces—but fruits that hang on the bough, full of promise for many a day until a hidden worm causes their premature ripening and decay. I fear,” she continued, “that he was thinking of the dear girl who is step by step withdrawing from our care and seems to have a yearning for this peaceful resting place.”

As they were about to leave, Natalie said: “I must draw your attention to one other thing. Do you see these semicircular openings up there on both sides? Those are for the choirs of singers, so that they may remain unseen, and these metal ornaments below the cornice are for hanging tapestries on, which, according to my uncle’s disposition, are to be hung at all funerals. He could not have lived without music, especially vocal music, but he had the peculiarity of never wishing to see the singers. He would say: ‘We have been spoilt too much by theaters, where music only serves the eye, accompanying movements, not feelings. In oratorios and concerts the physical presence of the singer is disturbing. Music is only for the ear. A lovely voice is the most universal thing one can think of, and if the limited individual producing it is visible, this disturbs the effect of universality. When I am talking to someone, I need to see him, for he is an individual whose character and figure determine the value of what he says; but when someone is singing, he should be invisible, his appear-

ance should not prejudice me in his favor or distract me. With singing it is a case of one organ addressing another, not one mind speaking to another, not a manifold world to a single pair of eyes, not heaven to a single man.' He also wanted players in an orchestra concealed as much as possible, because one is only distracted and disturbed by the laborings and necessary strange gestures of musicians. He therefore listened to music with his eyes closed, so as to concentrate entirely on the pleasure of the ear."

They were about to leave the Hall when they heard the children running hurriedly toward them and Felix shouting: "No, me! Me!"

Mignon came hurtling through the door, panting for breath and unable to get a word out, while Felix followed some distance behind, saying: "Mother Therese is here!" The children apparently had raced to see who could bring the news first. Mignon lay in Natalie's arms, her heart beating wildly.

"You naughty child!" said Natalie. "Haven't you been forbidden all violent movement? Look how your heart is beating!"

"Let it break!" said Mignon with a deep sigh. "It has been beating long enough!"

They had hardly recovered from their confusion and alarm when Therese entered. She rushed up to Natalie, embraced her, and then the child. She turned to Wilhelm, looked at him with her clear eyes, and said: "Well, my friend, what's the situation? I hope you haven't let yourself be deluded." He took one step toward her, she moved toward him and fell into his arms. "Oh, my Therese!" he cried. "My friend! My beloved! My husband! Yours for evermore!" she replied amidst passionate kisses.

Felix tugged her coat and said: "Mother Therese! I'm here too!" Natalie stood gazing in front of her, when all of a sudden Mignon shot up, clasped her heart with her left hand, flung out her right arm, and fell with a cry at Natalie's feet, as if dead.

Everyone was greatly alarmed. There was no sign of any movement in heart or pulse. Wilhelm took her into his arms and quickly lifted her up, her body hanging lifeless over his shoulders. The doctor came but gave little hope, though he and the young surgeon whom we already know did all they could—but in vain. The poor dear creature could not be brought back to life.

Natalie motioned to Therese, who took Wilhelm by the hand and led him out of the room. He was speechless, and did not have the courage to look her in the eyes. He sat beside her on the same sofa where he had first seen Natalie. In quick succession he thought about the fates of several people—or rather he did not think at all, he simply let his mind be invaded by what he could not repel. There are moments in our lives when events, like winged shuttles, flit backwards and forwards before our eyes, weaving continuously at a tapestry which we have more or less designed and spun for ourselves. "Dear friend! Beloved Wilhelm!" said Therese, breaking the silence and taking his hand, "let us keep a firm hold on this particular moment, as we will often have to do at other times. Events like these need two people to tolerate them. Do realize that

you are not alone, please feel that; show that you love me by sharing your sorrow with me!" She embraced him, pressing him gently to her breast; he clasped her in his arms, and pressed her against him. "That poor child," he said, "in her moments of sadness would look for refuge and protection in my uncertain bosom. May your certainty strengthen me in this terrible hour." They remained in each other's arms. He could feel her heart beating, but his mind was empty and desolate. Only the forms of Mignon and Natalie hovered like shadows before his imagination.

Natalie entered the room. "Give us your blessing!" said Therese. "Let us be united in your presence at this sad moment." Wilhelm's face was buried in Therese's breast; he was fortunate enough to be able to weep. He did not hear Natalie come, did not see her; but at the sound of her voice his tears redoubled. "What God has joined together, I will not put asunder," said Natalie with a smile. "But I cannot unite you, nor can I approve of the fact that sorrow and affection should erase all memory of my brother from your hearts." Wilhelm broke loose from Therese's arms. "Where are you going?" both women asked. "Let me see the child that I have killed," he cried. "Misfortune seen with our own eyes is a lesser evil than when our imagination forces it upon our minds. Let us go and see the departed angel. Her radiance will tell us that all is well with her." Since they could not restrain him, so deeply was he affected, they both followed him, but the good doctor, accompanied by the surgeon, dissuaded them from approaching the dead girl, and said: "Stay away from this mournful sight and let me use my art to give some permanence to the remains of this unusual person. I will start immediately to employ the delicate art of embalming, and also preserve an appearance of life in this beloved creature. Since I foresaw that she was dying, I have made all preparations, and my assistant and I will see that we succeed. Grant me but a few days and don't ask to see her until we have brought her into the Hall of the Past."

The young surgeon again had with him the instrument case they had noticed earlier. "Where did he get that case from?" Wilhelm asked the doctor. "I am very familiar with it," said Natalie, "he got it from his father who bound your wounds that day in the forest."

"So I was not mistaken," Wilhelm said. "I recognized the ribbon immediately. Give it to me! That ribbon first put me on the track of my benefactress. Inanimate objects like this outlast so much joy and sorrow! It was present at so much suffering, and yet its threads still hold. It was there at the last hours of many persons, but its colors have never faded. It was there at one of the most precious moments of my life, when I lay wounded on the ground and you came to my aid, while that poor child with blood on her hair was tenderly caring for my life, that girl whose own untimely death we now are mourning."

They did not have much time to acquaint Therese with the probable cause of the child's unexpected death; for visitors were announced, who turned out to be Lothario, Jarno and the Abbé. Natalie went up to her brother while the others stood in silence. Therese smiled and said to Lothario: "You hardly

expected to see me here, and it is hardly suitable for us to seek each other out at this particular moment. But I am glad to see you after so long an absence.”

Lothario grasped her by the hand and said: “If we must suffer and forebear, then let us do so in a spirit of love and goodwill. I do not demand any influence on your decision, and my confidence in your heart and mind and your good sense, is as strong as ever; so I gladly entrust to you my fate and that of my friend.”

The conversation then turned to more general and less important matters. They divided up into pairs. Natalie walked with Lothario, Therese with the Abbé, and Wilhelm stayed in the house with Jarno.

The arrival of the three friends at that moment when Wilhelm was weighed down with sorrow, in no wise distracted him; it irritated him and made his mood worse. He was ill-tempered and suspicious, and made no attempt to conceal this when Jarno asked him to account for his sullen silence. “What more do we need?” said Wilhelm. “Lothario arrives with his supporters, and it would be a miracle if the mysterious forces of the Tower, always so busy at something, did not work on us to achieve heaven knows what strange purpose. Those holy men, so far as I can make out, seem always to have the laudable intention of breaking up alliances and bringing together again what has been separated. What sort of pattern will eventually emerge from this, that will always remain a mystery to our unholy eyes.”

“You’re ill-tempered and bitter,” said Jarno. “That’s all well and good. But when you get angry, that will be still better.”

“That can be easily managed,” Wilhelm replied, “for I am very much afraid that delight is being taken in driving my native and my assumed patience to extremes.”

“In that case I would like, while we are waiting to see how our adventures turn out, to tell you something about this Tower that you seem so much to distrust.”

“It’s up to you,” Wilhelm replied, “if you feel like risking it when I am so distracted. My mind is occupied with so many things that I do not know whether I will be able to give the attention I should to your worthy adventures.”

“I will not be dissuaded by your pleasantry from informing you about this matter. You take me for a shrewd fellow, but I will also show you that I am honest—and what’s more, I have been instructed to give you this information.” “I could wish,” Wilhelm replied, “that you let your feelings speak with the intention of enlightening me. But since I cannot listen to you without mistrust, why should I listen to you at all?” “If all I have to do is to spin yarns for you, then you will surely have time to attend to those,” said Jarno. “Perhaps you will be more inclined to do so, if I first tell you that everything you saw in the tower was the relics of a youthful enterprise that most initiates first took very seriously but will probably now just smile at.”

“So they are just playing games with those portentous words and signs?” Wilhelm exclaimed. “We are ceremoniously conducted to a place that inspires

awe, we witness miraculous apparitions, are given scrolls containing mysterious, grandiose aphorisms which we barely understand, are told we have been apprentices and are now free—and are none the wiser.” “Do you still have the document?” asked Jarno. “There’s much that is good in it. Those general maxims have real solid foundation, though they may seem obscure, perhaps even meaningless, to someone without experience of his own. Would you please give me the so-called Certificate of Apprenticeship, if you have it at hand?” “Indeed I do,” Wilhelm replied. “One should carry an amulet like that always on one’s chest.” “Well,” said Jarno with a smile, “maybe someday its contents will enter your heart and your head.”

Jarno skimmed through the first half of the manual. “These remarks refer to the cultivation of our artistic sense—other persons will talk to you about that; the second part deals with life, and here I feel more at home.”

He then began to read certain passages, interspersing them with remarks, comments and stories. “Young people have an unusually strong hankering after mysteries, ceremonies and grandiloquence: this is often the sign of a certain depth of character. For at that time a person wants to feel, albeit dimly and indefinitely, that his whole being is affected and involved. A young man who is full of presentiments believes that he can account for much and discover even more in mysteries, and that he must work by means of mysteries. The Abbé encouraged a group of young people in this way of thinking, partly because it corresponded to his own principles, partly out of inclination and habit, for he had previously been connected with people who worked in this mysterious way. But I was the least able to conform to this; I was older than the others, had seen things clearly from early on, and valued clarity more than anything else. My sole interest was to know the world as it was, and I infected the best of the others with this passionate concern. As a result I almost deflected our whole pedagogic efforts on to a wrong track, for we began to see only the faults and limitations of others and consider ourselves as perfect. The Abbé came to our assistance, instructing us that we should not observe others except in order to show interest in their cultivation of themselves, and that we are only really able to observe or eavesdrop on ourselves when we are engaged in activity. He advised us to return to earlier forms of social life. As a result there was a certain adherence to laws in our meetings and a perceptible mysticism in our whole organization, which thereby, so to speak, transformed itself from craft into art. That’s why we evolved the appellations of Apprentice, Assistant, and Master. We wanted to make our own observations, and establish our own archive of knowledge. That is how the various confessions arose, written sometimes by ourselves and sometimes by others, from which the records of apprenticeship were subsequently put together. Not all are equally concerned with their self-cultivation—many want merely panaceas for contentment, or recipes for wealth and happiness. Those who did not want to be set on their feet, were obstructed or deflected by mystifications and all sorts of hocus-pocus. We assigned freedom of action only to those who felt deeply

and saw clearly what they were born to, and had enough experience of their own to pursue their chosen course with ease and gladness.”

“Well then,” said Wilhelm, “you were much too precipitate with me, for since that moment of liberation I know less than ever what I can do, or what I desire, or should do.” “It is not our fault that we got ourselves into this mud-dle,” said Jarno. “Let us hope that good fortune will get us out of it. Meanwhile let me say this: A person who has great potentiality for development will in due course acquire knowledge of himself and the world. Few people have the understanding and simultaneously the ability to act. Understanding extends, but also immobilizes; action mobilizes, but also restricts.”

“Do desist from giving me any more of these wondrous observations,” Wilhelm interjected. “Such verbiage has confused me quite enough.” “Very well then, let me go on with my story,” said Jarno, half rolling up the scroll and only glancing at it occasionally. “I myself have been very little use to the Society or mankind. I am a very bad teacher, for I find it unbearable to observe someone making clumsy attempts to do something. When someone is off the track, my inclination is always to alert him, even if it were a sleepwalker in danger of breaking his neck. I always had trouble on this score with the Abbé, who claimed that error can only be cured through erring. We often disagreed about you: he was very favorably disposed toward you, and it means a great deal to earn his approval. Whenever I encountered you, I always told you the honest truth.” “You certainly didn’t treat me with any indulgence,” said Wilhelm, “and you always remained true to your principles, so far as I can see.” “What indulgence is needed,” Jarno replied, “when it is simply a case of a young man with many a talent, embarking on the wrong course?” “Pardon me!” said Wilhelm, “you were severe enough to tell me that I had no talent for acting. But I must confess that, although I have given that up entirely, I cannot agree that I had absolutely no gift for it.” “My view is quite definitely that a man who always plays himself is not an actor,” said Jarno. “No one deserves to be called an actor who cannot transform his personality and appearance into that of many other persons. You, for example, played Hamlet quite well and a few other roles, where your character, your physical appearance and your mood of the moment assisted you. That would be good enough for an amateur and someone without higher aspirations. But,” said Jarno, with a quick look at the scroll, “one should be wary of any talent that one cannot hope to bring to perfection. However much one may achieve, one finally must regret the expenditure of time and energy on such dabbling when one is brought face to face with the achievements of a master.”

“Don’t start reading again!” said Wilhelm. “I would urge you just to go on talking: tell me more, give me more information! Am I then right in thinking that it was the Abbé who helped me in *Hamlet* by providing the Ghost?”

“Yes, because he was sure that was the only way to cure you, if you were curable.”

“And that is why he left the veil with me, and urged me to flee?”

"Yes; he hoped that the performance of *Hamlet* would be sufficient to satisfy your desire, and that you would never go on stage again. But I thought the opposite, and I was right. We argued about this that same evening after the performance."

"So you saw me act?"

"Yes, indeed I did."

"Then who was it who played the Ghost?"

"That I cannot say. Either the Abbé or his twin brother — probably the latter, for he is a shade taller."

"So you too have secrets amongst yourselves?"

"Friends can—and must—keep secrets from each other, for they are not secrets to each other."

"The very recollection of that confusion is enough to confuse me," said Wilhelm. "Do tell me some more about the man I am so indebted to and have so much to reproach for."

"What makes him so respected by us," said Jarno, "and what gives him supremacy over all of us, is the clear untrammelled perception Nature has given him into all human faculties, and how each is to be best developed. Most persons, even the best of us, are somehow limited. Each one of us values certain qualities in himself and the same in others, and it is only these qualities that we favor and wish to develop. But the Abbé takes an entirely different view; he is interested in everything, takes pleasure in acknowledging and furthering everything. I must now look at the scroll again," he went on, quoting: 'All men make up mankind and all forces together make up the world. These are often in conflict with each other, and while trying to destroy each other they are held together and reproduced by Nature. From the faintest active urge of the animal to the most highly developed activity of the mind, from the stammering delight of the child to the superlative expression of bards and orators, from the first scuffles of boys to those vast undertakings by which whole countries are defended or conquered, from the most meager desire and most fleeting attraction to the most violent passions and deepest involvements, from the clearest sense of physical presence to the dimmest intimations and hopes of distant spiritual promise—all this, and much else besides, lies in the human spirit, waiting to be developed, and not just in one of us, but in all of us. Every aptitude is significant and should be developed. One man cultivates the beautiful and another what is useful, but only the combination of both constitutes the true man. Usefulness cultivates itself, for it is cultivated by the general mass of people, and no one can do without it; but beauty must be expressly cultivated, for few people embody it and many need it.'"

"Stop!" said Wilhelm, "I've read all that already."

"Just a few more lines!" Jarno responded. "Here is the Abbé speaking again: 'One force controls another, but none can create another. In every predisposition, and only there, lies the power to perfect itself. Very few people who want to teach and affect others, understand that.'"

"I don't understand it either," said Wilhelm.

"You will often have the opportunity to hear the Abbé on this subject, so let us perceive quite clearly what we are and how we can develop ourselves, and be just toward others, for we only deserve respect if we respect others."

"Heavens! No more maxims, please! I feel they are inadequate balm for a wounded heart like mine. Tell me rather, with your customary cruel clarity, what you expect from me, and how you intend to victimize me."

"You'll be apologizing to us later for all your suspicions, I can assure you. Your job is to test and to choose; ours to assist you. No one is ever happy until his unlimited striving has set itself a limitation. Don't be guided by me; go to the Abbé. Don't think of yourself, but of those around you. Learn to appreciate Lothario's fine qualities, see how his farsightedness and his activities are indissolubly bound up with each other; he is always moving forward, always expanding and taking others with him. He always has a world around him, no matter where he may be, and his very presence invigorates and instigates. On the other hand, look at our dear doctor with his totally different disposition. Where Lothario always works in wide perspectives for the whole, the doctor directs his clear-sighted attention on the most immediate concerns, providing the means for activity rather than stimulating activity itself. His work is like good housekeeping, his influence consists in gentle encouragement of each in his own particular sphere, his knowledge is a continual process of collecting and transmitting, receiving and bestowing on a small scale. It may well be that Lothario could destroy in one day what the doctor has built over a period of years, but it may also be true that Lothario can impart to others in a single moment the power to restore a hundredfold what has been destroyed."

"It is a sad business," said Wilhelm, "to have to think about the excellent qualities of others at a moment when one is so divided within oneself. Such reflections are appropriate when one is calm, but not when one is tormented by passion and uncertainty."

"Calm rational reflection is never harmful," said Jarno, "and by accustoming ourselves to think about the virtues of others, our own good qualities will imperceptibly find their place, and every wrong line of action that our fancy inclines us toward will be gladly abandoned. Free your mind if you can from all suspicion and fear. Here comes the Abbé. Be polite to him until you have had time to find out how much you have to thank him for. Just look at the old rogue walking between Natalie and Therese! I bet he's up to something. He likes to try his hand at playing the role of Fate, and sometimes he cannot resist indulging in the pastime of arranging marriages."

Wilhelm's petulant, wrought-up mood had not been alleviated by Jarno's fine, sensible words, and he found it extremely indelicate of his friend to mention such a subject at this particular moment. So he said, smiling but with some bitterness: "I would think one should leave the pastime of arranging marriages to those who are in love with each other."

Chapter Six

Since the others had now joined them, our two friends found it necessary to break off their conversation. A courier was announced with a letter to be delivered directly into Lothario's hands. He looked sturdy and reliable, and was dressed in a livery that was sumptuous and in very good taste. Wilhelm had the feeling that he had met this man somewhere before, and he was not mistaken, for it was the same man that he had dispatched after Philine and the presumed Mariane, and who had never returned. He was about to speak to him when Lothario, having read the letter, asked him sternly and somewhat angrily who his master was.

"That is a question I am totally unable to answer," said the courier somewhat bashfully, "I hope the letter will tell you, for I was given no verbal instructions."

"Be that as it may," Lothario replied with a smile. "Since your master has the face to write to me so impudently, we will be glad to see him."

"He won't keep you waiting long," said the courier, as he bowed and retired.

"Just listen to this crazy, absurd communication," said Lothario. "He writes as follows: 'Since good humor is always the most welcome guest, and since I am always accompanied by this wherever I go, I am convinced that the visit I intend to pay your Graces will not be ill received. I hope to arrive with the whole noble family of Absolute Contentment, and then in due course depart, etcetera. Signed: Count Snail's Pace.'"

"That's a new family to me," said the Abbé.

"Maybe he has been temporarily elevated to the rank of Count," said Jarno.

"The mystery is easily solved," said Natalie. "I bet this is our brother Friedrich who has been threatening us with a visit ever since our uncle's death."

"Bull's eye! o wise and beauteous sister," said a voice from a nearby bush, and out came an attractive, lively young man. Wilhelm could not suppress a cry. "Why!" he said, "Is our blond little rogue here too?" Friedrich became attentive, looked hard at Wilhelm, and then said: "My goodness, I would have been less surprised to find in my uncle's garden the famous pyramids that stand so solidly in Egypt, or the tomb of King Mausolus which I am assured no longer exists, than you, my old friend and manifold benefactor. I am very glad to see you again!"

Once he had greeted and embraced everybody, he rushed back to Wilhelm, and said to the others: "Take good care of this hero, this chieftain, this dramatic philosopher! At our first meeting I really hackled him fiercely, yet he saved me from many a blow after that. He is as noble as Scipio, generous as Alexander, at times also in love but always without hating his rivals. Not only does he never heap coals on his enemies' heads, which is said to be a disservice, but he even sends trusty servants after those friends who have run off with his girl, to see that she doesn't come to any harm."

He went on and on in this fashion, with no one able to stop him; and since none of them could answer him in the same vein, he was the only one talking. "Don't be amazed," he said, "at my learning in sacred and profane matters. You will soon find out how I achieved it." They wanted to know how things were with him and where he had come from; but he was so full of moral tags and rusty anecdotes that he was unable to give them any precise information.

"His brand of merriment makes me uncomfortable," said Natalie quietly to Therese. "I bet he is not so happy as he pretends to be."

Since Friedrich's tomfoolery, apart from a few jokes parried by Jarno, did not elicit any response from the company, he said: "Well, it seems the only thing for me to do is to be serious in this most serious company, and since all my sins weigh heavily upon me in such sober circumstances, I must resign myself to making a general confession, but you, noble ladies and gentlemen, shall hear nothing of it. Only my worthy friend here, who is already familiar with some of my doings, shall be treated to this, for he has more cause than anybody to want to know. Aren't you curious," he said to Wilhelm, "to find out the how and the where, the who, the when and the why? And how the conjugation of the verb 'to love' went, and what all the derivatives of that delightful verb were?"

He took Wilhelm's arm and led him away, hugging and kissing him the while.

When Friedrich arrived in Wilhelm's room, the first thing he saw was a powder knife lying in the window, with the inscription: "Remember me!" "You take good care of your things," he said. "That is Philine's, and she gave it to you on the day I roughed you up so badly. I hope it made you think about that girl a lot; I can assure you that she has not forgotten you. If I had not long since removed any trace of jealousy from my heart, I would still view you with envy."

"Don't talk to me about that creature," Wilhelm replied. "I will not deny that for a long time I could not get rid of the impression her agreeableness made on me—but that was all there was to it."

"Shame on you!" said Friedrich. "Who can ever disavow that he loved someone? And you loved her as completely as one could possibly wish. Not a day passed without your giving her some present or other—and when a German gives presents, then he is certainly in love. There was nothing left for me to do but snatch her away from you, and the little red officer finally succeeded."

"How so? Were you the officer we saw at Philine's she went off with?"

"Yes, indeed—the one you took for Mariane. How we laughed at that mistake!"

"How cruel it was to leave me in such a state of uncertainty," said Wilhelm.

"And as for the courier you sent after us—we simply took him into our service! He's a fine fellow and never left us. And I still love the girl as madly as ever. She has so bewitched me that I find myself almost in a mythological situation, expecting every day to be transformed into something or other."

"But do tell me," said Wilhelm, "where have you got your learning from? I am astonished at your habit of referring constantly to ancient tales and fables."

"I became learned – indeed, very learned – in the most amusing way. Philine is living with me, we have rented an old castle, and there we sit like a couple of hobgoblins, having a most amusing time. We have a large, but also very choice, library which includes a huge old folio bible, a world history from the beginnings, two volumes of European history, a collection of anecdotes culled from the best Greek and Roman authors, the works of the celebrated poet Andreas Gryphius, and other titles of lesser importance. Sometimes when we had our fling and felt bored, we had the urge to read something, and before we knew it, were more bored than ever. Then Philine lit on the splendid idea of piling all the books on to the table and opening them up. We sat across from each other and read to each other, always bits and pieces, from one book and then from another. This was the greatest fun! We really thought we were in high society where it is deemed improper to stick to one topic for too long or go into it too deeply; and we felt we were in lively company where no one lets anyone else speak. We entertained ourselves day after day in this fashion, and thereby became so learned that we were astonished at each other. We soon found there was nothing under the sun that our knowledge could not account for. We varied our means of instructing ourselves, sometimes reading against an hourglass that would run out in a few minutes, then be reversed by Philine as she began to read from another book, and when the sand reached the bottom glass, I would begin my piece. And so we studied away in true academic fashion, except that our lessons were shorter and our studies more varied."

"I can understand such a crazy way of doing things when two such merry people as you are sitting side by side; but that you could stay so long together, I find not so easy to understand."

"There's a good and a bad side to that," said Friedrich. "Philine can't let herself be seen, doesn't even want to look at herself, for she is pregnant. You can't imagine anything more shapeless and ridiculous than she is. Shortly before I left she happened to catch sight of herself in a mirror. 'Oh, my god!' she said, turning her face away, 'the living image of Madame Melina! How hideous, how vulgar one looks!'"

"I must confess," said Wilhelm, laughing, "that it is pretty funny to think of you two as father and mother."

"It's a crazy trick that I should finally have to accept being the father. She says I am, and the timing seems to be right. But at first I was somewhat uncertain because of that visit she paid you after the performance of *Hamlet*."

"What visit?" said Wilhelm.

"You surely haven't forgotten it? If you don't know already, I can tell you that the delightfully palpable ghost that night was Philine. This was hard for me to accept as a dowry, but if one can't accept something like that, one shouldn't love at all. Fatherhood rests only on conviction; I am convinced, therefore I am the father. So you see: I can use logic in the right circumstances. And if the

child doesn't die laughing as soon as it is born, then it will be a pleasant citizen of the world, if not a useful one."

While these two were conversing with such gaiety about light-hearted matters, the rest of the company had embarked on a serious conversation. As soon as Friedrich and Wilhelm had gone off together, the Abbé led the others into the conservatory and, once they were seated, he delivered the following oration.

"We have made the general assertion that Therese is not the daughter of her mother, and it is now necessary for us all to be informed of the specifics. Here is the story, and I will document and corroborate it in every way possible.

"During the first years of their marriage Madame *** had a very good relationship with her husband, but the children they were hoping for, were all born dead, and on the third such occasion the doctors almost expected the mother to die and told her that the next time this would certainly happen. The two of them therefore had to reach certain decisions, but did not wish to dissolve the marriage because, from a domestic point of view, they were very happy. Mme. *** sought some kind of compensation for childlessness in the cultivation of her mind, in social activities, and vain pleasures. She was joyfully indulgent toward her husband when he developed an interest in a woman who took over the whole running of the household—a woman of beauty and good solid character. She soon came to approve this arrangement, according to which the good woman entrusted herself to Therese's father, continued the supervision of the household, and showed even more devotion than before to the lady of the house, and readiness to serve her.

"Some time later the woman announced that she was pregnant, and the couple arrived at the same idea, though for different reasons. The husband wanted to claim the child of his mistress as his own legitimate offspring, and his wife, annoyed that her doctor had been indiscreet enough to broadcast her situation, thought that she could regain her social status by accepting a substitute child, and by such an agreement maintain her control over her house, which she feared she might otherwise lose. She was more reticent than her husband, but realized what he wanted and knew how, without accommodating herself to his point of view, to make some explanation easier. She made her conditions, obtained almost everything she demanded, and that is how the terms of the will were established, which made very little provision for the child. The old doctor had died in the meantime, and so they turned to a young, intelligent physician who was well rewarded and extremely flattered to have the opportunity of revealing his deceased colleague's lack of skill and patience, and of putting things right. The natural mother agreed to all this, the deception was successfully accomplished, Therese came into the world, and was entrusted to a stepmother because her real mother fell victim to the deception by getting up from childbed too soon, died, and left the poor man disconsolate.

"Madame *** had, however, achieved her purpose. In the eyes of the world she now had a delightful child whom she displayed everywhere with excessive

pride, and she had got rid of a rival whose relationship with her husband she regarded jealously and whose influence in the future she secretly feared. She showered the child with affection, and, in moments of intimacy, found ways to win her husband over by expressing great sympathy at his loss, so that he abandoned himself to her completely, placed the fortunes of himself and his child entirely in her hands, and only shortly before his death, and then only through his grown daughter, did he once again become master in his own household. This, my dear Therese, was probably the secret that your ailing father was trying to tell you; this is what I wanted to tell you about in detail while our young friend, your future bridegroom by a strange concatenation of circumstances, was not with us. Here are papers which prove the truth of what I have been telling you. You will see how long I have been on the track of all this and that I have only recently become certain about it. I did not dare suggest to my friend earlier that the achievement of a happy union with Therese was possible, for if this had turned out to be wrong a second time, he would have been utterly despondent. Now you will understand Lydie's suspicions; for I must confess that I never encouraged his affection for that girl, once I contemplated again the possibility of his marrying Therese."

Nobody expressed any reaction to what he had told them. The women returned the papers after a few days, without any further mention of the matter.

There was plenty in the neighborhood to keep the assembled company diverted, and the country was so delightful that they made frequent excursions alone or in groups, either by foot, on horseback or in carriages. On one such occasion Jarno explained to Wilhelm his proposal, showing him the relevant documents, but not pressing for a decision on Wilhelm's part.

Wilhelm's reaction was as follows: "Given the strange situation in which I find myself, I can only repeat what I said earlier with all sincerity in Natalie's presence. Lothario and his friends can legitimately demand every kind of renunciation from me, and so I hereby abandon all claim to Therese's hand. Please secure me the formal permission to leave. I can assure you, my friend, that my decision requires no further reflection. I have felt these last days that Therese is having difficulty in preserving that appearance of delight with which she first greeted me. Her affection is estranged from me; or perhaps I have never had it."

"Such situations resolve themselves better over the course of time, gradually, and in silence, rather than by a lot of talking, which only produces ferment and embarrassment," said Jarno.

"I would have thought," Wilhelm replied, "that just such a situation as this should be resolvable by an act of clear, quiet decision. I have so often been reproached with dilatoriness and indecision; why then, when I am firmly decided, should I be expected to indulge in a failing I have so often been charged with, this time to my own disadvantage? Does the world take such trouble to educate us, merely to show us that it cannot educate itself? Just

allow me the satisfaction of ridding myself of a fruitless relationship which I entered into with the best intentions in the world—and that right soon.”

Despite his request, several days passed without his hearing any more about the matter or noticing any change in the attitudes of his friends, for all the conversation tended to be general and unconcerned.

Chapter Seven

Natalie, Jarno and Wilhelm were sitting together, when Natalie said: “You have something on your mind, Jarno. I’ve been noticing that for quite a while.”

“Yes I have,” he replied. “There is an important venture we have been planning for a long time, and it seems to me that now is the time for it to get started. You,” he said to Natalie, “already know about it in general terms, and I must tell our young friend about it, because it will depend on him whether he wishes to take part. You will not be seeing me here much longer, for I am about to embark for America.”

“America?” said Wilhelm, with a smile. “I would not have expected such a wild idea from you, still less that you would choose me to accompany you.”

“Once you know our whole plan,” said Jarno, “you will not consider it a wild idea and might well be taken with it. Let me explain. One does not have to know much about the present state of the world to realize that great changes are impending and property is no longer safe anywhere.”

“I have no clear sense of that,” said Wilhelm, “and have only recently concerned myself about my possessions. Perhaps I would have done better to neglect them still longer, for concern about their preservation seems to make people gloomy.”

“Let me finish what I have to say,” said Jarno. “Concern befits age, whereas youth can well do without it for a while. Balanced activity can unfortunately only be achieved by counterbalancing. At the present moment it is highly inadvisable to have all one’s property and all one’s money in one place, but on the other hand it is difficult to manage them if they are in different places. We have therefore worked out a new plan: from our ancient Tower a Society shall emerge, which will extend into every corner of the globe, and people from all over the world will be allowed to join it. We will cooperate in safeguarding our means of existence, in case some political revolution should displace one of our members from the land he owns. I am now going to America in order to take advantage of the good connections that Lothario made when he was over there. The Abbé will be going to Russia, and you shall have the choice, if you wish to join us, of either staying with Lothario in Germany or coming with me. I would imagine that you would choose the latter, for a long journey can be very advantageous for a young man.”

Wilhelm collected himself and replied: “Your proposal is certainly worth consideration, for my motto in the immediate future will be: The farther away,

the better. I hope you will give me more details about your plan. It may be due to my insufficient knowledge of the world, but it seems to me that there are insuperable difficulties in establishing such an organization."

"Most of which will be overcome," said Jarno, "because so far there are a few of us honest, intelligent, determined persons, with a broad enough vision to establish such a Society."

Friedrich, who had been listening but said nothing till now, exclaimed: "If you will put in a good word for me, I will go with you."

Jarno shook his head at this.

"Why not?" said Friedrich. "What do you object to in me? A new colony will need young colonists: those I will bring you, and amusing ones at that, I can assure you. And then there is a fine young girl I know, who has no place over here any longer: I mean that sweet, charming Lydie. Where shall the poor girl go with all her sorrow and pain, except into the depths of the sea unless some worthy fellow takes charge of her. I would have thought," he said, turning to Wilhelm, "that since you are good at consoling abandoned women, you would decide to let everyone take his girl along, and then we could all follow this old gentleman."

This made Wilhelm angry. He answered, with seeming composure: "I don't even know whether Lydie is free, and since I do not seem to be very lucky in wooing, I would not want to try that."

"Friedrich," said Natalie, "when you yourself act so frivolously, you imagine that others share your point of view. Our friend here deserves a woman's heart that belongs only to him and is not beset by extraneous memories. Only with someone as sensible and pure in heart as Therese would such a risk have been advisable."

"What do you mean by 'risk?'" said Friedrich. "Love is always a risk, whether under the trees or before the altar, in embraces or wedding rings, when crickets are chirping or drums and trumpets playing, everything is a risk, everything is decided by chance."

"I have always thought," said Natalie, "that our principles are merely supplements to our existence. We are all too ready to give our faults the semblance of valid principles. Look out for the path that pretty girl, who at the moment attracts and claims you so strongly, will lead you."

"She herself is on a very good path," said Friedrich, "the path to sanctity. It is a detour, for sure, but all the more amusing and secure. Mary Magdalene went the same way—and who knows how many others. When the talk is of love, my dear sister, you really shouldn't intervene. I don't believe you will marry until some bride or other is missing, and you, with your customary generosity, will provide yourself as a supplement to someone's existence. So let's conclude our business with this seller of souls, and agree on who is to join the travelling party."

"You're too late with your proposal," said Jarno. "Lydie is already provided for."

"How so?" asked Friedrich.

"I have offered her my hand in marriage," Jarno replied.

"Old man," said Friedrich, "you are embarking on something which, as a substantive, invites various adjectives, and as a subject all sorts of predicates."

"I must honestly confess," said Natalie, "that it seems to me a dangerous venture to take over a girl at the moment when she is desperate because of love for another."

"I have taken the risk," said Jarno. "She will be mine under one condition. There is nothing in the world more precious than a heart capable of love and passion. Whether it has loved, or still loves—that's not what matters. The loved bestowed on another is for me almost more appealing than that with which I may be loved. What I perceive is the power and strength of a loving heart, and my self-love will not cloud this perception."

"Have you spoken to Lydie recently?" she asked.

Jarno nodded with a smile. Natalie shook her head and, getting up, said: "I no longer know what to make of you all. But I can tell you that I myself will not be led astray by you."

She was about to leave when the Abbé came in with a letter in his hand, and said to her: "Don't leave! I have here a proposal that I would like your opinion on. The Marchese, your late uncle's friend, whom we have been expecting for some time now, will be here in a few days. He writes that he is not so much at ease in the German language as he thought, and he needs a companion who is at home in that language and in several others. Since he wishes to establish scholarly rather than political connections, an interpreter of this kind is essential to him. I cannot think of anyone more suited for this than our young friend here. He knows his own language and is informed about many things, and it will be a great advantage for him to get to know Germany in such good company and under such favorable conditions. He who does not know his own country has no yardstick with which to measure others. What do you say, my friends? What do you say, Natalie?"

Nobody could think of any reason to object to this proposal. Jarno did not seem to see in it an obstacle to his plan of going to America; he was not intending to depart immediately. Natalie was silent. Friedrich recited various tags about the usefulness of travel.

Wilhelm was so enraged at this new proposal that he could hardly contain himself. He saw in it an arrangement to get rid of him as quickly as possible, an all too obvious stratagem and, what was worse, one that was announced publicly without any consideration for him. The suspicions that Lydie had aroused in him, together with all that he himself had experienced, came alive in his mind, and the unpretentious way that Jarno had explained things to him now seemed to him false and contrived.

But he controlled himself sufficiently to say: "Your proposal certainly deserves consideration."

"A speedy decision might be necessary," said the Abbé.

"I am not ready for that," Wilhelm replied. "Let us wait until the man arrives. Then we can see whether we are suited to each other. But one condition must be agreed on in advance, that I take Felix with me and that he shall accompany us everywhere."

"That condition will hardly be acceptable," said the Abbé.

"I don't see why I should allow conditions to be dictated to me by anybody, nor why, if I am to see my native land, I need an Italian to accompany me."

"Because a young man," said the Abbé with impressive solemnity, "always has cause to seek the company of other people."

Wilhelm, realizing full well that he was unable to control himself much longer and that his temper was restrained only by the fact that Natalie was present, replied somewhat hastily: "Allow me a little time to think this over; I believe it will not take me long to decide whether I really need to seek further company, or whether my heart and mind will not irresistibly impel me to liberate myself from so many bonds that threaten to produce a state of wretched, lasting imprisonment."

That he said with deep feeling. A glance at Natalie assuaged him somewhat, her person and all it meant for him affecting him more strongly than ever in this moment of anguish.

"You might as well admit it," he said to himself when he was alone again. "You are in love with her; once again you are experiencing what it means to love someone with your whole being. It was like this when I loved Mariane, and things went so terribly wrong. I was in love with Philine, but could not respect her. I respected Aurelie, but could not love her. I revered Therese, and my paternal feelings led me to feel affection for her. But now when all those emotions which should make one feel happy fill my heart—I am being forced to leave! Oh; why must the irresistible desire to possess her associate itself with what I am now experiencing, and why without the certainty of possession, do these feelings, these convictions destroy all else that makes me happy? Will I ever again be able to enjoy the sun and world, the company of others, or any other pleasures? Will I not always say to myself: 'But Natalie is not here!' And yet, unfortunately, she will always be there. If I close my eyes, she will appear before me; if I open them, she will dominate everything like the effect produced by a blinding image in the eye. Was not the fleeting vision of the Amazon always present in my imagination, though I had only seen her, but did not know her? And now that you do know her and have been close to her, now she has shown such interest in you—now all her qualities are as clearly impressed on your mind as her image was formerly on your senses. It is always troublesome to seek, but more troublesome to find and have to do without. What else should I ask for from the world? Why should I look around any longer? What country, what town contains a treasure equal to this? Why should I travel all over the place just to discover something of lesser value? Is life nothing but a racecourse, where one must turn round immediately once one has reached the outmost limit? Are goodness and excellence a firmly

established, immovable goal which one must hastily retreat from just when one believes one has reached it, whereas those who only strive for earthly possessions can acquire them in various places, even at markets or fairs?"

"Come, dear boy," he said to his son who had just run up to join him, "may you be and remain everything for me. You were given to me in place of your dear mother, you shall replace that second mother I had intended for you; now you have a larger gap to fill. Your beauty and charm, your thirst for knowledge and your developing abilities shall totally occupy my heart and mind."

The boy was busy playing with a new toy. His father tried to make it work. But while he was doing this, the child lost interest. "You're just like the rest of us," said Wilhelm. "Come, son! Come, brother-man, let's saunter about in the world, without any particular goal, as well as we can!"

His decision to leave, taking the child with him, and to distract himself by seeing what the world had to offer, was now firmly established. He wrote to Werner, asking him for money and letters of credit, and sent this by Friedrich's courier, instructing him most specifically to return soon. However much he was irritated with all his other friends, nothing clouded his relationship with Natalie. He confided to her what he intended to do, and she accepted it as self-evident that he could, indeed had to, do that; and although her apparent indifference to his decision caused him pain, her kindness and her very presence did much to comfort him. She advised him to visit various cities, where he could get to know some of her friends, both men and women. The courier returned, bringing what Wilhelm had asked for, despite the fact that Werner did not approve of this new venture at all. "I had hoped you were becoming sensible at last," he wrote, "but that seems to have been put off for a while. Where will you all be drifting to? And where will the woman be whose help in domestic affairs you gave me reason to think you had hopes of? None of the others will be around, so the whole burden of the business arrangements will have to be borne by me and the magistrate! Thank goodness he's as good a lawyer as I am a businessman, and we are both accustomed to shouldering responsibilities. Goodbye for the present. Your aberrations are forgivable, for without them we would not have gotten along so well in this part of the world."

As far as external conditions were concerned, Wilhelm could have left immediately, but his mind was preoccupied with two obstacles to this. First: They had refused to allow him to see Mignon's corpse, except at the funeral exequies, which the Abbé was determined to hold, though the preparations were not yet completed. Secondly, the doctor had been called away by a strange letter from the pastor, which had some reference to the Harper, and Wilhelm wanted to find out more about his situation.

In these circumstances neither his mind nor his body could be at rest, by night or by day. When everyone else was sleeping, he was pacing up and down in the house. The presence of those old familiar paintings partly attracted and partly repelled him. He could neither accept nor reject what surrounded him, everything reminded him of something else, he could see the whole chain of

his life, but at the moment it lay in pieces which would not join together again. These works of art, the ones his father had sold, seemed to him a symbol of the fact that he too was partly excluded from calm, solid possession of what was desirable, and partly deprived of this by his own fault or that of others. He became so lost in these lugubrious reflections that he sometimes seemed to himself like a ghost, and even when he was feeling and touching objects outside himself, he could hardly resist the sense of not knowing whether he was alive or not.

It was only the stab of pain that he sometimes felt at so wantonly and yet so necessarily having to abandon what he had found and refound, only his tears that gave him once more the sense that he was indeed still alive. In vain did he remind himself of the fortunate state he was in. "Everything is worthless," he said to himself, "if that one single thing is lacking which makes everything else worthwhile."

The Abbé announced the arrival of the Marchese. "It seems," he said to Wilhelm, "that you are determined to go off alone with your son, but do at least make the acquaintance of this man, for wherever you may encounter him on your travels, he could be useful to you." The Marchese appeared, a man not far advanced in years, one of those handsome, agreeable Lombard types. He had made the acquaintance of the uncle, who was much older than he, when he was a young man in the army, and then through business transactions. Later they had traveled together through a great part of Italy, and the works of art that the Marchese rediscovered here, had been largely acquired while he was present, and on various happy occasions which he vividly remembered.

The Italians have a deeper sense of the value of art than other nations. Anyone who does anything wants to be an artist, a master or professor, and acknowledges through this craze for titles that acquiring things by inheritance is not enough, nor is achieving skills by practice. Italians concede that one should be able to think about what one does, establish principles and elucidate for oneself and others the reasons why this or that should be done.

The guest was touched to rediscover these beautiful objects without their owner, and delighted to find the spirit of his friend pervading his admirable descendants. They looked at the various works, and experienced great comfort at being able to relate to each other. The Marchese and the Abbé led the conversation; Natalie, feeling once again in the presence of her uncle, found it easy to agree with their thoughts and opinions. Wilhelm had to translate everything into theatrical terminology, if he was to understand what they said. It was hard to restrain Friedrich's joking. Jarno was rarely present.

In consideration of the fact that fine works of art are rare in modern times, the Marchese said: "It is not easy to contemplate what part circumstances have to play in an artist's activity, and the endless demands an outstanding genius, a person of remarkable talent, has to make on himself, and the immense effort he must expend on his training and development. If external conditions do little for him, if he concludes that the world is easily satisfied and only desires

a pleasing and comforting illusion, it would be surprising if convenience and self-satisfaction did not commit him to mediocrity, and it would be strange if he did not prefer to acquire money and praise by producing fashionable wares than by pursuing a course that will more or less result in impoverishment and martyrdom. Therefore the artists of our age are always offering instead of giving. They always aim at attracting rather than satisfying. Everything is suggested, with no solid foundation and no proper execution. One only needs to spend a short while quietly in a gallery, observing what works of art appeal to the multitude, which of them are praised and which are ignored, to lose all joy in the present age and have little hope for the future.”

“Yes,” said the Abbé, “and as a result the artist and the lovers of art have a mutual influence on each other. The lover of art looks for some general indefinite pleasure: the work of art is to appeal to him just like a natural object. People tend to believe that the faculty of appreciating art develops as naturally as the tongue or the palate, and they judge a work of art as they do food. They do not understand that a different type of culture is required to attain a true appreciation of art. What I find most difficult is the separation a man must achieve within and for himself if he is ever to attain self-cultivation. That is why we encounter so many one-sided cultures, each of which presumes to speak for all.”

“I am not quite clear what you mean,” said Jarno, who had just joined the others.

“It is difficult,” said the Abbé, “to speak briefly and definitively about this matter. All I would say is this: When a person sets himself a goal of manifold activity or experience, he must be capable of developing manifold organs in himself which are, in a manner of speaking, independent of each other. Anyone who aims at acting or experiencing with his total self, or tries to embrace everything outside himself into one total experience, will spend his time in constantly unfulfilled striving. How difficult it is to do what may seem so natural, to consider a fine statue or a superb painting in and for itself, music as music, acting as acting, a building for its own proportions and permanence! Nowadays most people treat finished works of art as if they were soft clay. The finished marble shall modify its shape according to their inclinations, their opinions and whims, the firmly established building expand or contract; a painting shall offer instruction, a play be morally uplifting, everything become something else. But because most people are themselves without form, since they cannot give a shape to their own self, their personality, they labor away at depriving objects of their form, so that everything shall become the same loose and flabby substance as themselves. They reduce everything to what they term ‘effects,’ to the notion that everything is relative; and so the only things that are not relative are nonsense and bad taste which, in the end, predominate as absolutes.”

“I understand what you are saying,” Jarno replied. “Or rather, I can see that what you are saying conforms to the principles you always firmly advocate.

But I cannot be so hard on those poor devils, those human beings you speak of. It is true that many of them are reminded of their own wretched deficiencies when they are in the presence of great works of art and of nature, that they take their conscience and morality with them to the opera, do not discard their loves and hates before a noble colonnade, and their comprehension necessarily diminishes the grandeur and splendor of what comes to them from outside, so that they may be able to relate it somehow to their own paltry selves."

Chapter Eight

In the evening the Abbé summoned everyone to the funeral rites for Mignon. The whole company repaired to the Hall of the Past, and found it strangely decorated and illuminated. The walls were almost entirely draped with tapestries of azure blue, so that only the base and the frieze remained uncovered. Huge wax candles were burning in the four big candelabras at the corners of the room, and others of appropriate size in the four smaller ones surrounding the sarcophagus in the center. Four boys were standing beside the bier, dressed in silver and blue, fanning with sheaves of ostrich feathers a figure that lay on top of the sarcophagus. The assembled company all took their seats, and two invisible choruses intoned in gentle strains: "Whom do you bring to those at rest?" The four boys answered, with love in their voices: "A weary comrade we bring unto you; here let it stay and rest till joyful comrades in heaven shall wake it once more."

CHORUS. Child so young for this our realm, welcome, be welcome in sorrow!
Nor boy, nor girl shall follow thee! Old age alone shall wend its way, eagerly, calmly, here to this silent hall, but thou, dear child, shalt rest here too, rest in solemn company.

BOYS. Sadly we brought her here, here shall she stay. We too will stay, weep and mourn, shed our tears above her corpse.

CHORUS. See now the mighty wings, see the light unspotted robe, the golden circle gleaming in her hair; see the beauty and grace of her repose.

BOYS. They lift her not, those mighty wings. Her garments float no more in easy play. Her head we crowned with roses, sweet and friendly was her gaze.

CHORUS. Lift the eyes of the spirit! May in you dwell the power that transports what in life is finest, loveliest, up aloft, beyond the stars.

BOYS. Down here she is lost to us now. In gardens she wanders no more, flowers she gathers no more. Let us weep and leave her here, let us weep and stay with her.

CHORUS. Children, return to life! Your tears shall be dried in freshness of air circling water's edge. Flee the night! Daylight and joy and continuance—those are the lot of the living.

BOYS. We rise and turn to life again. The day shall give us labor and joy, till evening brings us rest, and night refreshing sleep.

CHORUS. Hasten back to life anew! And beauty clothed in raiment pure shall bring you love, the sight of heaven, and the crown of immortality.

The boys moved away, and the Abbé rose from his seat and stepped behind the sarcophagus. "The man who prepared this silent dwelling-place," he said, "left instructions that each new arrival should be received with due ceremony. The designer and builder of this hallowed place came first; now we have brought here a young stranger, so that this one room encloses two very different victims of the solemn, arbitrary and inexorable goddess of death. Fixed laws govern our entry into life and the number of our days, our maturing in countenance of the light, but there is no law that prescribes the length of our life. The feeblest lifethread may stretch into unexpected length, and the strongest may be forcibly severed by Fate, which seems to delight in inconsistency. The child that we bury here, we know little about. We know not from where it came, nor who its parents were; and we can only guess at the length of its life. Its firmly locked heart gave us no inkling of what was going on inside it; nothing was clear or apparent about her except her love for the man who rescued her from the clutches of a barbarian. This tender affection and her intense gratitude seemed to be the flame that consumed the oil of her life. The doctor's skill could not preserve the beauty of her life, nor could friendship and care prolong it. But if art could not give permanence to her spirit, it could employ every skill to preserve her body and save it from decay. Balsam has been introduced into all her veins and, instead of blood, this colors those cheeks that faded so early. Draw near, my friends, and observe the wonders of art, the sum of solicitude!"

He lifted the veil, and there lay the child in its angel costume, as if sleeping, in the most pleasing position. They all stepped up, and marveled at this semblance of life. Only Wilhelm remained seated. He could not bring himself to do otherwise, he could not think about what he was feeling, for every thought seemed to shatter what he felt.

The Abbé had spoken in French, for the benefit of the Marchese, who stepped up with the others and looked attentively at the figure before him. The Abbé went on to say: "This good heart that was so closed to us, was always open to its God, in whom it had sacred trust. Humility, even a tendency toward self-debasement, seemed to be natural to her. She adhered fervently to the Catholic religion, in which she had been born and raised. She often expressed the desire to be interred in consecrated ground, and we have, according to the custom of her church, consecrated this marble coffin and the small amount of earth it contains, which is concealed in her pillow. In her last moments she fervently kissed the image of the Crucified One, which was delicately traced in hundreds of dots on her little arms." As he said this, the Abbé lifted the sleeve from her right arm, and there on her white skin they saw a bluish crucifix, together with various letters and signs.

The Marchese observed this very closely. "Oh God!" he cried, standing up straight and extending his arms to Heaven, "oh, you poor child, my unhappy

niece—it is here that I find you at last! What painful joy it is to find you again, when we had so long abandoned all hope of doing so, to find your dear, sweet body that we thought was snatched by the fish of the lake, to find you again—dead, but preserved! I have witnessed your burial, glorified by its surroundings and even more by the good friends who accompanied you on your road to this place of rest. And when I am able to speak again,” he said with a broken voice, “I will thank them all.”

Tears prevented him from saying more. Pressing a spring, the Abbé lowered the corpse into the depths of the marble sarcophagus. Four young men, dressed like the boys, came from behind the hangings, placed the heavy, beautifully decorated lid on to the sarcophagus, and began to sing:

THE YOUTHS. The treasure now is well preserved, the beauteous image of the past. Unconsumed, in marble it rests; in your hearts it lives and works. Guide your steps back into life once more! With you take this solemn zeal, for zeal is sacred, it alone transforms life into eternity.

The invisible chorus joined in these final words, but no one heard their fortifying message, so absorbed were they all in the strange revelations and their own feelings. The Abbé and Natalie walked out with the Marchese; Therese and Lothario followed with Wilhelm. Only when the singing had completely died away, were they once more overcome with sorrow, reflection, consideration and curiosity, and longed to be back in the peace of what they had just left.

Chapter Nine

The Marchese avoided saying anything further openly, but he did have some long private conversations with the Abbé. When they were all together, he often asked for music, a request willingly granted because everyone was pleased to be relieved of the necessity of making conversation. Time passed, and he was making preparations to leave. One day he said to Wilhelm: “I do not wish to disturb the remains of that dear child. Let her stay where she loved and suffered. But her friends must promise to visit me in her homeland, in the place where she was born and raised. They must see the columns and statues she remembered in her song, the coves where she gathered pebbles. You, young man, will not decline the thanks of a family that is so indebted to you. I am leaving tomorrow. I have confided the whole story to the Abbé and he will communicate it to you. As an outsider he will be able to relate it more coherently than I could under the stress of my sorrow, for which he has already forgiven me. If you still wish to accompany me on my travels through Germany, as the Abbé has suggested, I would be delighted. And do bring your boy along with you; and if he should cause some occasional inconvenience, we will remember the care and consideration you gave my poor niece.”

That same evening they were surprised by the arrival of the countess. Wilhelm was trembling in every limb when she came into the room, and she, though not unprepared, kept close to her sister who showed her to a seat. How simple was now her dress, how changed her appearance! Wilhelm could hardly bear to look at her. She greeted him, and a few general remarks sufficiently revealed her thoughts and feelings. The Marchese had retired early, but the rest of the company had no desire to disperse. The Abbé produced a manuscript, saying he had committed to paper the strange story he had been entrusted with, and that pen and ink had not been spared in recording the details of such a remarkable sequence of events. The countess was informed of what they were referring to, and the Abbé began to read what the Marchese had told him:

“Much as I have seen of the world, I must consider my own father as one of the oddest men I ever knew. He was of noble, upright character, his ideas were broad and, one could well say, big; he was strict toward himself, in all his plans there was unflinching purposefulness, in all his actions, steadiness and consistency. Productive as it was, on the one hand, to consort and do business with him, he himself had difficulty in being at ease in the world, because he demanded from the state, his neighbors, his children and his servants conformity to the same laws that he imposed on himself. His most modest demands became aggrandized by his strictness, and he was never entirely satisfied, because nothing turned out as he had wanted it to. I have seen him when he was building a palace, planning a garden, or acquiring a fine new estate, inwardly resentful at the conviction that fate had condemned him to self-denial and toleration. He maintained great dignity in his behavior: when he joked, it was to show his superior intelligence, he could not bear criticism and I only once saw him lose his temper, which was when he heard someone refer to one of his undertakings as ridiculous. It was in this spirit that he treated his children and handled his wealth. My elder brother was brought up to become the lord of huge estates, I was to enter the church, and my younger brother the army. I was vigorous, fiery, active, quick and good at all bodily activities. My younger brother was more inclined to a life of reflective repose, and devoted to study, to music and to poetry. It was only after a great struggle, when my father became ultimately convinced of the impossibility of his intentions for our future, that he agreed, though even then unwillingly, that my younger brother and I should switch professions; but although he saw that this was what we wanted, he was never resigned to it and foretold that no good would come of it. The older he became, the more cut off he felt from all society, till finally he lived almost entirely alone. Only one old friend, who had served in the German army, lost his wife during a campaign, and had a daughter about ten years old, provided my father with companionship. This man acquired a pleasant property in the neighborhood, visited my father regularly at certain times each week, often bringing his daughter with him. He never opposed my father, who came to consider him finally as the only company he could put up with. After

my father's death we noticed that this man had been well provided for by my father—in fact he had not wasted his time. He enlarged his property holdings and his daughter had expectations of a fine dowry. She grew up to be an exceptionally beautiful girl, and my elder brother often teased me by saying I should seek her hand.

“Meanwhile, my brother Augustin was spending his time at the monastery in the most peculiar way: he gave himself over to indulgence in ecstasies of both spiritual and physical nature, which at times transported him into a seventh heaven, but at others plunged him into depths of weakness and a void of misery. While my father was still living, any change for my brother was unthinkable; even so, what could we have wished to propose? After my father's death, Augustin came to see us frequently. His condition, which we had pitied at first, became more tolerable, for he himself had become more reasonable. But the more his reason promised him health and contentment by following the course of nature, the more urgently did he implore us to liberate him from his vows. And he told us that his intentions were directed toward Sperata, the girl in our neighborhood.

“My elder brother had suffered too much from my father's severity to remain unmoved by the condition of his youngest brother. We both spoke with the family confessor, a fine old man, and revealed to him our brother's intentions, urging him to initiate and facilitate the matter. He expressed hesitation such as was unusual for him, but when our brother pressed us further and we advocated the matter more ardently to the confessor, he had to reveal to us a very strange story.

“What he told us was that Sperata was our sister, the child of both our father and mother. Affection and heat of the senses had come over my father once more in those later years when conjugal rights usually have abated. There had been much amusement recently over a similar case in the neighborhood, so my father, in order not to incur ridicule, decided to conceal this late, legitimate fruit of his love with the same care that other people conceal accidental products of their early affections. Our mother's delivery took place secretly, the child was taken into the country, and my father's old friend, who apart from the confessor was the only other person who knew the secret, pretended the child was his own daughter. The confessor had agreed not to reveal the secret except in dire emergency. My father's friend died, the young girl was placed in the care of an old woman. We knew that love of singing and music had led to my brother visiting her, and when he repeatedly demanded that we should release him from his former bonds in order to forge a new one, it became necessary to tell him as soon as possible of the danger with which he was beset.

“He looked at us with wild, scornful eyes. ‘Spare me such outlandish tales,’ he said, ‘they are only for children and credulous ninnies. You will never tear Sperata away from me. She is mine. Dismiss this terrifying phantom with which you vainly try to scare me. Sperata is not my sister, she is my wife!’ — He

then ecstatically described how this heavenly girl had led him out of his state of unnatural isolation into what is truly life, how their minds had joined like two throats in harmony, and how he even came to bless his former pain and aberration for depriving him of the company of woman so that he could now devote himself entirely to this lovely girl. We were horrified at this discovery, pitied him, but did not know what to do. He assured us quite definitely that she was carrying a child by him. Our confessor did everything his duty required, but that only made matters worse. My brother vehemently opposed all he said about the demands of nature, of religion, morality and social order; nothing was sacred to him save his relationship to Sperata, no names more worthy than those of father and wife. 'Such designations,' he said, 'are natural, all else is fancy or opinion. Haven't there been great nations that have sanctioned marriage with one's sister? Don't talk about your gods, you only refer to them when you want to fool us, lead us away from nature, distort our noblest instincts into crimes by infamous coercion, committing your victims to utter distraction of mind and disgraceful misuse of their bodies, burying them alive. I should know, for I have suffered more than anybody, falling from the highest pitch of rapture and ecstasy, down into the terrible waste of insensibility, emptiness, destruction and despair, from the loftiest sense of the existence of supernatural beings into the depths of disbelief, disbelief in oneself. I had drunk the terrible dregs of the cup whose lip had been so enticing, and every part of my being was poisoned. And now, when benevolent Nature has healed me by its greatest gift—the gift of love—now that I feel once again, at the bosom of this lovely girl, that I exist, that she exists, that we are one, that from our living union a third person will come and smile at us—now you loose the fires of hell and purgatory, which can only singe morbid imaginations, and hurl them at the unassailable certainty of the experience of true, living, pure love! Come and meet us beneath those cypresses that extend gravely into the sky, visit us in those groves where lemons and pomegranates surround us, and the tender myrtle unfolds its delicate blossoms—and then try to frighten us with your dismal, gray, man-made entrapments!'

"He persisted for a long time in not believing what we had told him, and even when we assured him of its truth, and the confessor confirmed this, he would not be deflected. On the contrary, he cried out: 'Don't listen to the echoes of your cloisters, don't consult your musty parchments, your crotchety and quirky regulations: ask Nature and your hearts. Nature will tell you what you have to tremble at: she will solemnly point to what she has irrevocably laid her lasting curse upon. Consider the lilies: Do not husband and wife grow on one and the same stem? Does not the blossom they bear unite them? And is not the lily the image of innocence? Is not its sibling union fruitful? Nature clearly indicates what it abhors: a creature that should not exist, cannot exist, develops wrongly, or is soon destroyed. The marks of her curse, the signs of her severity are: barrenness, stunted growth, premature decay. She metes out her punishments right away. Look around you: You will not see anything that

is forbidden, anything that bears her curse. In the silence of the cloister and the bustle of the world, thousands of actions are honored and sanctified which bear Nature's curse. She regards with sadness both easy leisureliness and overstrained activity, free choice and abundance as well as compulsion and neediness; she advocates moderation. Her terms are valid, her workings gentle. He who has suffered as I have, has the right to be free. Sperata is mine; only death shall take her from me. How am I to keep her? How am I to be happy? That is for you to worry about. I'm going to her now, and never will I be parted from her.'

"He was about to board the ship to join her, but we dissuaded him, urging him not to do what might have the direst results. He should remember, we said, that he was not living in the free world of his own thoughts and ideas but in a state whose laws and customs had the inviolability of natural law. We had to promise the confessor that we would not let our brother out of our sight, and certainly not out of our castle. Augustin left us, promising to return in a few days. What we expected, occurred: His mind was strong, but his heart was weak, his earlier religious feelings revived, and he was overcome by terrible doubts. He spent two fearful days and nights, the confessor tried to help him, but in vain. His reason, when left to itself, absolved him of all blame, but his feelings, his religion, all customary concepts, declared him a criminal.

"One morning we found his room empty. There was a letter on the table telling us that, since we were restraining him by force, he was justified in seeking his freedom; he was going to Sperata, hoping to flee with her, and was prepared for all eventualities, should we try to separate them.

"We were much afraid, but our confessor constrained us to remain calm. Our poor brother had been closely watched, and the boatmen, instead of ferrying him across the water, returned him to his monastery. Tired from two days of wakefulness he fell asleep as soon as the boat began to rock in the moonlight, and did not waken until he was in the hands of his spiritual brothers. He did not recover until he heard the monastery gate closing behind him.

"Painfully affected by our brother's fate, we heaped reproaches on the confessor. But this worthy man soon persuaded us with medical arguments that our sympathy for the poor sick fellow was mortally dangerous. He said he was not acting on his own account but under orders from the bishop and the consistory. The intention was to avoid all public unpleasantness and cover up this sad case with the veil of secret ecclesiastical discipline. Sperata should be spared; she should never discover that her lover was her brother. She was referred to a priest to whom she had previously confided her physical condition. Her pregnancy and delivery were kept secret. She was happy to be the mother of the little creature. Like most of our young girls she could neither read nor write; and therefore she told the priest what he should say to her lover. The priest thought he owed a nursing mother some pious deception; so he brought her news of our brother without ever seeing him, told her in his name to be at peace, take good care of herself and the child, and leave the future to God.

“Sperata was by nature inclined to be religious. Her condition and her loneliness only increased this tendency, and the priest encouraged it so as to prepare her for a lasting separation. As soon as the child was weaned, and she had regained sufficient bodily strength, the priest began to present to her in terrifying colors her offense in giving herself to a priest, which he termed a sin against nature, a form of incest. For he had the strange idea of making her repentance like to that she would have felt if she had known the true nature of her transgression. By this means he brought great grief and misery into her mind, stressing the importance of the church and its high authority, depicting the terrible effects on the salvation of souls if clemency were exercised in such cases and the guilty rewarded by approving such a union. He indicated to her the saving grace of temporal atonement and the consequent attainment of the crown of glory. And in the end, like a poor sinner, she gladly sacrificed herself, imploring them to separate her forever from our brother. Since they had now achieved this much, they allowed her the freedom, though under supervision, to stay in her own dwelling or in the cloister.

“The child grew and soon revealed strange characteristics. It began very early to run and develop great skill in bodily movements, it would sing very pleasingly, and soon learned by its own efforts to play the zither. But it could not express itself in words, and the obstacle seemed to be in its mind rather than in its speech organs. The poor mother had a sad relationship with the child, the priest having so confused her that, without being mad, she found herself in the strangest state of mind. Her crime became ever more fearful and impious to her, and the reference to incest had impressed itself so strongly on her, that she was overcome by repulsion, as if she had known the true nature of their relationship. The confessor often wondered about the image he had used, which had broken the girl’s heart. It was pitiful to see how a mother’s love, delighting in the living presence of the child, fought with the ghastly thought that the child should not be there at all. The conflict between these two feelings became intensified, but repulsion soon won out over love.

“Quite early on they took the child away from her and gave it to some good people living down by the lake, and with this greater freedom it developed a special delight in climbing. The child made her way up the highest hills, clambered along the sides of ships, and imitated the feats of ropedancers who sometimes came to these parts—all this quite naturally.

“In order to be able to move more freely in all this bodily exercise, she wore boys’ clothing, and although her foster parents thought this improper and undesirable, we tried to be as indulgent as we could. Her strange walks and climbs often led her far afield: she would get lost, stay away, but then reappear. When she returned, she would usually seat herself between the columns of the portal of a nearby villa. Nobody searched for her anymore, she was always to be found there, resting on the steps, running into the great hall, peering at the statues and then, unless she was detained by someone, running home.

“But our trust was deceived and our indulgence paid its price, for one day she did not return, her hat was found floating on the water not far from the

place where a mountain torrent gushed into the lake. It was assumed that she had fallen whilst clambering over the rocks. Extensive searches were made, but the body was never found.

“Through the thoughtless gossip of some of her companions, Sperata soon learned of the death of her child. She seemed calm and serene and gave it to be understood that she was clearly pleased that God had taken the poor little creature unto Himself and thereby spared it from experiencing or creating even greater misfortune.

“In this connection all sorts of wild tales began to be bruited about regarding our lakes. For example: Every year a lake must have an innocent child, it will not tolerate a dead body and will sooner or later cast it up on the bank, even the very last bone will come up from the bottom. A story was told of one disconsolate mother whose child had drowned in the lake and who implored God and all the saints to allow her at least to bury the bones. The next storm cast up the skull, the next the rump, and when everything was together she carried all the bones in a cloth to the church. But then a miracle happened! As she was entering the building, the package got heavier and heavier, and finally, when she laid it on the steps of the altar, the child began to cry and to everyone’s astonishment broke out of the cloth. Only one bone of the little finger of its right hand was still missing, which the mother sought and found, and this was preserved as a memorial amongst other relics in the church.

“These tales had a great effect on poor Sperata. Her imagination awakened and intensified the desire of her heart. She assumed that the child had atoned for itself and its parents, that the curse and punishment which had previously lain upon it were now entirely removed, and that what she had to do now was to find the bones and take them to Rome; then the child would appear before the people, in its fresh white skin, on the steps of the high altar of St. Peter’s. It would once again look upon its father and mother, and the Pope, convinced of the approval of God and the saints, would forgive the parents their sins, to the loud acclaim of the assembled throng, absolve them and join them in marriage.

“Her eyes and attention were now always directed toward the lake and its shores. When at night the waves rolled in the moonlight, she would believe that every one of them was casting forth her child, and someone ought surely to run down there and pick it up on the bank.

“During the daytime she tirelessly visited those places where the stony shore ran into shallow parts of the lake, gathering into a little basket all the bones she could find. Nobody dared tell her these were animal bones. She buried the large ones, but kept the smaller ones. She continued relentlessly in her search. The priest who, impelled by an irresistible urge of duty, had brought about her condition, began to devote himself to her in every way he could. Influenced by him, people in the neighborhood began to consider her as someone in a state of religious rapture, not as someone out of her mind. They would stand with folded hands when she passed by; the children would even kiss her hand.

“Her old friend and foster mother was absolved by the confessor of her sin in bringing the two together, on the condition that she stay always with the poor unhappy creature, an obligation which she patiently and faithfully fulfilled until the very end.

“Meantime we had not lost touch with our brother. Neither the doctors nor the monastery authorities would let us visit him; but to convince us that he was well enough in his way, they allowed us, as often as we wished, to observe him in the garden or the cloister, even through a window in the ceiling of his room.

“After many terrible and peculiar periods, which I will not pause to describe, he entered on a strange state of mental repose and bodily restlessness. He hardly ever sat down except when playing his harp, which he often accompanied with song. Most of the time, however, he was restless, though easily guided and glad to follow, for all the violence and passion of his nature seemed now to focus on one thing—the fear of death. One could get him to do anything by threatening him with mortal illness or death.

“Apart from his habit of continually walking about in the monastery and asserting, in no uncertain terms, that it would be still better to be traversing hills and valleys, he spoke about an apparition that was constantly tormenting him. What he said was that every time he woke up, no matter at what hour of the night, he would see a handsome boy standing at the foot of his bed, threatening him with an open knife. They put him in another room, but he said the boy was there waiting for him. His walking back and forth became more and more restless, and people remembered afterwards that at that time he could be frequently seen at the window, looking out over the lake.

“Meantime our poor sister seemed to be steadily more and more worn down by her single preoccupation and her limited activity. So our doctor proposed that the bones of a child’s skeleton should gradually be intermingled with those she already had, to increase her hopes. The idea seemed somehow dubious, but what might possibly be achieved, was that, when everything was put together, she might at least be persuaded to cease her endless searching and look forward to a journey to Rome.

“And so it was: her companion secretly exchanged what she had acquired with what Sperata herself had gathered, and a great joy spread over the poor woman’s face when the parts gradually fitted together and she was told which were still lacking. She had fastened every part where it belonged with ribbon and thread, and had filled in the gaps with silk and embroidery as is done to honor the remains of saints.

“Everything was by now assembled, except for a few extremities. One morning, when she was still asleep, the doctor came to inquire how she was, and her old companion took the pieces out of the casket in the bedroom in order to show him what she had been busying herself with. Soon after this they heard her getting out of bed, lifting up the cloth, and, finding the box empty, falling on her knees. They came into the room and heard her fervent joyful prayer. ‘It is true!’ she cried. ‘It wasn’t a dream, it is true! Rejoice, my friends!

I have seen the dear, lovely creature alive again. It rose up, threw off the veil, its radiance filling the room, its beauty transfigured, its feet unable to touch the ground, even had they wished to. It was lifted up lightly into the air and could not even touch me with its hand. Then it called to me, showing me the path I had to follow. I will follow my child, and soon. I feel this, and my heart is easy, so easy. My sorrow is departed; and the sight of my risen child has given me a foretaste of heavenly bliss.'

"From this time on, her whole soul was filled with joyful prospects. She no longer paid attention to earthly things, took little food, and her spirit gradually freed itself from the weight of the body. One day they found her unusually pale and without feeling, she never again opened her eyes, she was what is called dead.

"The report of her vision soon spread amongst the people, and the reverence she had aroused while she was still alive, gave way when she died to the conviction that she was to be considered blessed, maybe even holy.

"When she was carried to her grave, people thronged around to touch her hand or at least her garment. In the experience of passionate exaltation many sick people no longer felt the torments that had afflicted them; they thought they were cured and acknowledged this, praising God and his new saint. The priests were obliged to place her body in a chapel, and the people demanded to worship there. Large numbers came: miners (who always tend toward strong religious feeling) flocked from their valleys; reverence, adoration and miracles increased from day to day. Episcopal ordinances to restrict, and finally discredit, this new form of religious worship, could not be implemented: any attempt to curb it was vigorously opposed by the populace, who began to take active steps against any disbelievers. Did not the saintly Borromeo appear in these parts among our forefathers? Did not his mother experience the joy of his canonization? Does not that great statue on the rock of Arona portray in visible form his spiritual greatness? Do not his own descendants still live amongst us? Has not God agreed to renew his miracles amongst a people of believers like ourselves?

"When, after several days, the body showed no signs of corruption, was whiter than ever, and almost transparent, the people's faith increased and there were several cures, which no attentive observer could explain or dismiss as false. The whole district was in a state of excitement, and even those who did not come to see, heard about nothing else for a long time.

"The monastery where my brother was was filled with reports of these marvels, like the rest of the district, but no one took pains to conceal these things from my brother, since he paid so little attention to anything and his relationship with Sperata was not known to anyone there. But this time he seemed to listen very carefully to what he heard, and engineered his escape so craftily that no one could understand how he managed it. It was later ascertained that he got himself ferried across the lake with a group of pilgrims, and implored the boatmen, who did not notice anything odd about him, to take extreme care

that the boat should not capsize. Late at night he came to the chapel where his beloved was resting after her suffering. There were only a few worshippers kneeling in the corners, and her old companion was seated by her head. He went up to the woman, greeted her and asked how her lady was. 'You can see for yourself,' she said, with some embarrassment. He looked at the corpse, but only from the side. After some hesitation he took Sperata's hand but, horrified at its coldness, let it drop immediately, looked around distractedly, and said to the old woman: 'I cannot stay with her now. I still have a long way to go. But I will come back soon. Tell her that, when she wakes.'

"And so he left. We were only told about this later, tried to find where he had gone to, but with no result. How he managed to make his way over mountains and valleys, we do not know. He finally left traces in the canton of Grisons in Switzerland, but it was too late for us to follow them up. After that he disappeared completely; we believed that he was somewhere in Germany, but the war completely obliterated any signs of his whereabouts."

Chapter Ten

The Abbé finished reading. They had all wept as they listened. The countess was still wiping her eyes; finally she stood up and left the room with Natalie. The others were silent. Then the Abbé said: "The question now arises whether we should let the Marchese leave without telling him what we know, but he does not. For how can there be the slightest doubt that Augustin and our Harper are one and the same person? We ought to consider what we should do, both for the sake of that poor unfortunate man and for the family. My advice would be to do nothing hastily, to wait and see what news the doctor will bring us."

Everyone agreed; so the Abbé continued: "There is another question that can perhaps be dealt with more quickly. The Marchese is deeply moved by the kindness his niece has enjoyed from us, and particularly from our young friend. I have told the Marchese all about it, and he has warmly expressed his gratitude. 'That young man,' he said, 'declined to accompany me on my travels before he knew the bond that exists between us. But now I am no longer a stranger for him, one whose moods and temperament he might well feel uncertain about: I am his associate, his close relative as it were, and since the main obstacle to his joining me was his son, may this child now become a finer, firmer bond to knit us together. In addition to what I owe him, his companionship on the journey would be extremely useful to me. Let him return with me, my elder brother will receive him gladly, and let him not despise the inheritance of his foster child, for, according to a private agreement between my father and a friend of his, the money he set aside for his daughter reverts to us, and we will certainly not deny the benefactor of our niece what he has so amply deserved.'"

Therese took Wilhelm by the hand, and said: "We are experiencing once again one of those happy occasions when unselfishness and generosity earn the best interest. Follow this strange call, and while making yourself doubly valuable to the Marchese, hasten toward that beautiful country that has more than once engaged your heart and your imagination."

"I consign myself entirely to my friends and their direction," said Wilhelm, "for it is useless trying to act according to one's own will in this world. What I most wanted to keep, I have to let go, and an undeserved benefit imposes itself upon me."

He pressed Therese's hand and withdrew his. "I leave it entirely to you, what you decide about me," he said to the Abbé. "So long as I do not have to separate myself from Felix, I am ready to go anywhere or undertake anything that is appropriate."

Having heard this, the Abbé unfolded his plan: the Marchese should take his leave, Wilhelm should wait for the doctor's report, and then, when they had considered what should be done about the Harper, Wilhelm should follow with Felix after the Marchese. The Abbé suggested to the Marchese that their friend's preparations for his journey should not prevent him from examining the monuments of the town. The Marchese departed, but not without repeated assurances of his gratitude, which the various presents he left—jewels, gems, fabrics—amply attested.

Wilhelm was now all ready to leave, but everyone was concerned that no news came from the doctor. They feared that some misfortune might have befallen the poor old Harper just when there were good expectations of an improvement in his condition. They dispatched the courier; but the doctor arrived that same evening accompanied by a man of impressively grave appearance, whom nobody recognized. Neither of them said anything at first, then the stranger walked up to Wilhelm, stretched out his hand, and said: "Don't you recognize your old friend?" His voice was that of the Harper, but his appearance was totally different. He was dressed like a normal traveler, clean and tidy, the beard was gone, his hair was cared for, and what made him quite unrecognizable was that there were no signs of age in his features. Wilhelm eagerly and joyfully embraced him, and introduced him to the others. His behavior was completely rational, but he was quite unprepared for how well they knew him. "I must ask you," he said calmly, "to be patient with someone who may look grown-up but, after a long period of suffering, has re-emerged into the world as an inexperienced child. I owe it to this fine man here that I can once more appear in the company of others."

They welcomed him into their midst, and the doctor immediately suggested a walk, in order to break off the conversation and turn it into more neutral channels.

Once he was alone with the others, the doctor gave this account of what had happened: "It was the strangest chance that enabled us to effect his cure. For a long time we had been treating him morally and physically as we thought fit,

things were going pretty well, but his fear of death was still intense, and he would not give up his beard or his long cloak. Otherwise, he was taking more interest in the things of this world, and his songs as well as his mental reactions seemed to indicate that he was drawing closer to life again. You will remember that strange letter from the pastor, which caused me to rush away last time. I went home and found the man completely changed: he had voluntarily had his beard removed and his hair dressed in a normal fashion, he asked for ordinary clothes, and seemed suddenly to have become a different person. We were curious to find out what had caused this, but did not dare to ask him about it.

“Then by pure chance we discovered a strange chain of events. A glass of liquid opium was missing from the pastor’s medicine cabinet, and it was thought necessary to conduct a thorough search. Everyone was eager to absolve himself from suspicion, and there were some violent altercations amongst the persons in the house, until one day the Harper admitted that he had it. He was asked whether he had taken any of it, and said no. But he continued: ‘I owe the return of my wits to this. You have the power to take it away from me, but if you do, you will see me lapse back into my former condition. It was the sense that it would be desirable to see one’s earthly suffering terminated by death that first put me on the way to recovery. Soon after this the idea occurred to me of terminating it myself, and it was for this reason that I took the flask of opium. The possibility of ending my suffering gave me the strength to bear my suffering, and now that I have this talisman, I have forced my way from the presence of death back into life again. Do not be concerned that I shall make use of it,’ he said. ‘Satisfy yourselves, as persons with knowledge of the human heart, that you have made me attached to life by allowing me the means of detaching myself from it.’ After mature consideration we decided not to press him any further, and he now carries on his person, in a secure glass bottle, this poison, the strangest of antidotes.”

They informed the doctor of everything they had discovered, and it was decided not to reveal any of this to Augustin. The Abbé undertook never to let him out of his sight, and to guide him further along the path to recovery.

Meanwhile it was decided that Wilhelm should undertake his tour of Germany with the Marchese, and if it seemed possible to revive in Augustin the desire to see his native land of Italy, this would be communicated to his relatives and Wilhelm could return him to them.

Wilhelm had by now made all preparations for his journey, and if at first it seemed strange that Augustin was glad to hear that his old friend and benefactor was setting out again, the Abbé soon discovered the reason for this unexpected reaction. Augustin had never overcome his fear of Felix, and was therefore glad to see the boy depart as soon as possible.

By now so many guests had arrived that there was no longer any room in the castle and the adjoining buildings, especially since arrangements had not been made in advance for their accommodation. They breakfasted and dined together, and would have liked to persuade themselves that they were living in

a delightful state of harmony, were it not for the fact that in their minds they were quietly veering away from each other. Therese had gone riding several times with Lothario, even more frequently on her own, and had made the acquaintance of all the landowners, male and female, in the neighborhood. This was her particular concept of domesticity, and she may well have been right in believing that one should be on the very best footing with neighbors and cultivate mutually helpful relationships. There seemed to be no talk of a marriage between her and Lothario. Natalie and the countess had a great deal to say to each other, the Abbé was always watching out for the Harper, Jarno having frequent conferences with the doctor, Friedrich clinging to Wilhelm, and Felix turning up wherever he could have a good time. They tended to walk in pairs when the company dispersed, and when they had to come together again, they took refuge in music so that they could be together and also alone with themselves.

An unexpected addition to the company was the count, who came to fetch his wife and, apparently, take formal leave of his worldly relations. Jarno ran to meet his carriage, and when the count asked who the company consisted of, Jarno said, in one of those fits of crazy humor that always came over him when he saw the count: "You will find the whole nobility here: Marcheses, Marquises, Mylords and Barons. All we lacked was a Count." They walked upstairs, and Wilhelm was the first person to meet them in the anteroom. "Mylord!" said the count to him in French, after inspecting him for a moment, "I am delighted to be able to renew our acquaintance so unexpectedly, for I must be gravely mistaken if I did not meet you in the prince's entourage when he was in my castle." "I did have the good fortune, Your Grace, to wait on you at that time," said Wilhelm, "but you show me too high a regard in considering me an Englishman, and, in addition, one of high rank. For I am a German and . . ." "A real good fellow," said Jarno, breaking in immediately. The count smiled at Wilhelm, and was about to say something, when the rest of the company came in and greeted him cordially. Excuses were made for not giving him suitable accommodation at once, but a promise was made to remedy this situation as soon as possible.

"Well, well!" he said, laughing. "I see the quartering arrangements have been left to chance, whereas foresight and planning can achieve marvels! But don't move a single thing, otherwise I can see there will be absolute bedlam. Everybody will be uncomfortable, and that shouldn't happen to anybody on my account, not even for one hour. You were witness," he said to Jarno, "and you too, Mister," turning to Wilhelm, "to the large number of people I comfortably housed that time in my castle. Give me a list of the guests and their servants, show me where everyone is housed at present, and I will rearrange things so that, with the least expenditure of effort, everyone gets comfortable quarters and there is still room left for the guest who turns up unexpectedly."

Jarno acted straight away as though he were adjutant to the count, brought him all the necessary information and had the greatest fun, according to his

fashion, in leading the old gentleman astray. The latter, however, soon achieved a tremendous triumph. The whole rearrangement was completed, he had the names put over all the doors, and nobody could deny that the goal had been achieved with a minimum of reorganization and fuss. In addition to this, Jarno had so arranged things that persons with a particular interest in each other at the moment were accommodated in adjoining rooms.

When this was all settled, the count said to Jarno: "Help me to get clear about that young man you call Meister, who is said to be a German." Jarno said nothing for the moment, because he was well aware that the count was one of those people who, when they ask to be informed, really want to inform you themselves. Anyhow, the count, without waiting for an answer, went on to say: "It was you who introduced him to me then and commended him to me in the prince's name. If his mother was German, then I would vouch for it that his father was an Englishman, and of high station. The amount of English blood flowing in German veins during the last thirty years is considerable. I won't press the point further; everyone has family secrets. But I can't be hoodwinked in such matters." He then went on to recount various episodes involving Wilhelm at that time in his castle, to which Jarno said nothing, although the count was quite wrong and several times confused Wilhelm with a young Englishman in the prince's retinue. The old gentleman had once had an excellent memory, and was always proud at being able to recall the most insignificant details of his youth. But now he confidently imposed the stamp of truth on the wildest combinations of fancy that his imagination created out of failing memory. He had become very gentle and agreeable, and his presence had a salutary effect on the company. He requested that they should read something useful together, and even arranged little entertaining pastimes with great care, though not participating in them himself. And when people expressed their amazement at his condescension, he would say that it was incumbent on anyone who withdraws from the world in major matters, to consort with the world on minor matters.

More than once Wilhelm had an anxious moment during these entertainments, and frivolous Friedrich irritated him by hinting at an interest in Natalie on Wilhelm's part. How did he arrive at that idea? What gave him the justification for thinking this? And, since he and Wilhelm were much together, would not the company conclude that Wilhelm had slipped him an incautious and unfortunate confidence?

One day when they were amusing themselves and merrier than usual, Augustin appeared at the door, tore it open, and rushed in. His whole appearance was frightening—his face deathly pale, his eyes wild, his attempts to speak, fruitless. They were all alarmed: Lothario and Jarno, suspecting a recurrence of his madness, grabbed him and held him fast. First he stuttered indistinctly, but then shouted loud and clear: "Don't stay here holding me! Hurry up! Help! Save the child! Felix is poisoned!"

They let go of him, and he rushed out of the door with the whole company following in horror. The doctor was called. Augustin directed his steps to the

room of the Abbé, where they found the child, frightened and ill at ease when they called to him as they drew nearer, asking him what he had done.

“Father!” said Felix, “I did not drink out of the bottle, I drank from the glass. I was so thirsty.”

Augustin wrung his hands and said: “He is lost!” He pushed his way through the others and ran away.

On the table they found a glass of almond milk and beside it a half-empty carafe. The doctor arrived, heard what they had been told, and then observed to his horror the bottle that had contained the opium lying empty on the table. He gave him some vinegar to drink, and used all his skill to help the child.

Natalie had Felix carried to her room, where she anxiously took care of him. The Abbé had run off to find Augustin and elicit more information from him. The unhappy father had done the same, but without success, and when he returned he found consternation on everyone’s face. The doctor had examined the drink in the glass and found that it contained a strong admixture of opium. The child was lying on a sofa and seemed very ill. He asked his father not to make him drink any more for it hurt him. Lothario sent people to discover where Augustin had gone, then himself went in search of him. Natalie sat by the child, who crept on to her lap, asking her to protect him and give him a piece of sugar because the vinegar was much too sour. The doctor agreed to this, saying that the child, who was in a very troubled state, should be allowed to rest for a while. All that should be done, had been done; as for the rest, he himself would do everything that was humanly possible. The count came in—somewhat unwillingly, so it would seem—looking grave and ceremonious. He laid his hands on the child, turned his eyes to Heaven, and remained for some minutes in this posture. Wilhelm, who had been stretched out disconsolate in a chair, jumped up, looked despairingly at Natalie, and left the room. The count left soon afterwards.

“I do not understand,” the doctor said after a while, “why there are no signs of a dangerous condition in the child. Even if he only took one gulp, he must have absorbed a massive dose of opium, but his pulse shows no acceleration, except that caused by my medication and the state of fright we have put him in.”

Jarno then brought the news that Augustin had been found in the attic lying in a pool of blood. There was a razor beside him, so he had probably cut his throat. The doctor rushed off and met the persons bringing down the body. It was placed on a bed and carefully examined. The cut had penetrated the wind-pipe, and he had fallen unconscious after a severe hemorrhage. But it soon became clear that there were still signs of life, and hope. The doctor placed the body in the proper position, dealt with the laceration, and put a bandage over the place. The night passed uneasily and sleeplessly for everyone. The child would not be separated from Natalie. Wilhelm sat in front of her on a stool, with the child’s feet on his lap and its head and chest on hers. So between them they shared the pleasing burden and the pain of anxiety, and remained in this

uncomfortable position until daybreak. Natalie had stretched out her hand which Wilhelm was clasping, neither of them said a word, they both looked at the child, and then at each other. Lothario and Jarno were sitting at the other end of the room, engaged in a very important conversation, which we would have gladly communicated to our readers if we were not so preoccupied with the rapid course of events. The boy slept peacefully, and woke quite happy in the early morning, jumped up, and asked for something to eat.

As soon as Augustin was somewhat recovered, they tried to get some more information out of him. What they did find out, was only extracted with difficulty and piece by piece. For instance: when as a result of the count's unfortunate rearrangements Augustin found himself in the same room as the Abbé, he discovered the manuscript with his life story, read it with horror, and became convinced that he could not live any longer. He then took his usual refuge in opium, poured some of it into a glass of almond milk, but recoiled at the moment he lifted it to his lips. He then left it standing while he went into the garden to look at the world once more. When he returned, he found the child about to refill the glass from which it had been drinking.

They urged the poor unhappy man to compose himself, but he grasped Wilhelm's hand frantically. "Oh!" he cried, "why did I not leave you long ago! I knew perfectly well that I would kill the child, and he me." "But the boy is alive," said Wilhelm. The doctor, who had been listening carefully to what Augustin said, asked him if all the drink had contained poison. "No," he said, "only the glass." "Then it was a lucky chance," said the doctor, "that the boy drank only from the bottle. Some good angel guided his hand so that he did not clutch the death that awaited him." "No, no!" cried Wilhelm, covering his eyes with his hands. "What a dreadful thing to say! The boy specifically said that he did not drink from the bottle, only out of the glass. He only seems not to be ill; he will wither away!"—And with these words he hurried out of the room. But the doctor went up to the child, stroked its head, and said: "Tell me, Felix; didn't you drink from the bottle, and not from the glass?" The little boy began to cry. The doctor spoke quietly to Natalie, telling her how matters stood. She then in turn tried to get the truth out of the child, but in vain. He cried bitterly, and continued to cry until he fell asleep.

Wilhelm watched over him, and the night passed peacefully. The next morning Augustin was found dead in his bed. He had deceived the watchful eyes of those attending him by feigning sleep, then quietly taken off the bandage, and bled to death. Natalie went for a walk with the child who was as cheerful as in his happiest days. "You are so kind," he said to her. "You never get angry, you never beat me. So I will tell you: I did drink out of the bottle. My mother Aurelie always slapped my fingers when I reached for the carafe. My father looked so fierce, I thought he was going to hit me."

Natalie flew with winged steps to the castle. Wilhelm came to meet her, still full of anxiety. "Happy father!" she cried, lifting up the child and placing it in

his arms, "Here you have your son back! He did drink out of the bottle; his bad habit saved him."

The count was told the fortunate outcome, but he received the news with a smile and that modest, quiet sense of not being surprised, which enables us to tolerate the mistakes of well-meaning persons. Jarno, attentive to everything, could not understand such lofty self-satisfaction, till after much searching he found out that the count was convinced the child really had taken poison but had been miraculously preserved by the count's prayers and his laying-on of hands. The count now decided it was time for him to leave, his packing was as usual done in a trice, and on their departure the countess took Wilhelm's hand with one hand while still holding Natalie's in the other, pressed all four together, turned away quickly and leapt into the carriage.

This large number of terrible and strange events following one upon the other, brought about such a change in everyone's life, such continual disorder and confusion, that a kind of feverish agitation came over the whole household. Times for sleeping and waking, eating, drinking and social gatherings were delayed or reversed. Apart from Therese, everyone was thrown off course. The men tried to regain their normal good spirits by drinking intoxicating liquors, and while they acquired thereby a certain artificial enlivenment, they lost that spontaneity that alone can produce true good spirits and actions.

Wilhelm was disturbed, and disorganized by strong emotions. His whole being became totally bereft, through all these terrible unexpected happenings, of any power to withstand the passion that had taken such a strong hold over his heart. Felix had been restored to him, and yet everything seemed to be wrong. The letters with final arrangements were there from Werner, and all he needed for his journey was the courage to leave. Everything was pressing him to start out. He could well imagine that Lothario and Therese were simply waiting for him to leave, in order to get married. Jarno was unusually quiet; one might even say he had lost some of his usual brightness. Fortunately the doctor helped Wilhelm out of his quandary, by declaring that he was sick and giving him medicine.

The company came together every evening and Friedrich, that uninhibited fellow who usually drank more wine than he should have, monopolized the conversation, making them laugh in his usual way with hosts of quotations and waggish allusions, but often disconcerting them by his habit of saying exactly what he thought.

He seemed not to believe in Wilhelm's "sickness." One evening, when everyone was present, he said: "What's the name of the sickness afflicting our friend, Doctor? Which of those three thousand names would you select to cloak your ignorance? There is no lack of similar cases. There is one," he added ominously, "in Egyptian, or Babylonian, history."

They all looked at each other, and smiled.

"What was the king's name?" he said, pausing for a moment. "If you don't prompt me, I'll know where I can find out." He opened the doors and pointed

to the large painting in the anteroom. "What's the name of that old goatee with the crown, pining away at the foot of the bed of his sick son? What's the name of the beauty who enters with poison and antidote simultaneously in her demure, roguish eyes? Who is that botcher of a doctor who suddenly sees the light and for the first time in his life can prescribe a sensible remedy, give medication which is a complete cure and is as tasty as it is effective?"

He went on swaggering in this tone. Everyone present did their best to control themselves and concealed their embarrassment behind forced smiles. A light flush came over Natalie's cheeks and betrayed the feelings she was harboring. Fortunately for her she was walking with Jarno, and when she reached the door, she skillfully managed to slip out, paced to and fro a few times in the anteroom and then went to her own room.

The others were all very quiet. But then Friedrich began to dance, and sing:

Ah what wonders you shall see!
What's done, is done,
What's said, is said.
Before day breaks,
Wonders shall you see.

Therese had followed Natalie, and Friedrich led the doctor up to the painting, delivered a ridiculous encomium on medicine, and crept away.

Lothario had been standing motionless in a bay window, looking out into the garden. Wilhelm was in a sorry state. Being at last alone with his friend, he nevertheless remained silent, quickly surveying his life up to that point and finally shuddering at his present situation. Suddenly he jumped up and said: "If I am responsible for what is happening to you and me, then rebuke me! My suffering is now aggravated by your withdrawing your friendship, leaving me without this consolation to go out into the wide world I should long have been part of. If, however, you regard me as a victim of the cruel enmeshment of chance, from which I was unable to disentangle myself, do give me the assurance that your friendship and love will accompany me on a journey I can no longer postpone. The time will come when I can tell you what has been going on within me these last days. Perhaps I do deserve a rebuke for not unbosoming myself to you earlier, for not revealing my whole self. If I had, you would have stood by me and helped me out. Time and time again my eyes have been opened to what I am, but always too late and always to no purpose. How I deserved that dressing down by Jarno! I thought I had understood it well enough to embark on a new life! Could I? Should I? There is no sense in blaming either fate, or ourselves. We are all miserable creatures, destined for misery; and is it not a matter of complete indifference whether it is our own fault or the workings of some higher force, or chance, virtue or vice, wisdom or madness, that plunges us into destruction? Farewell! I will not stay a moment longer in a house where unwittingly I have so grievously abused such gracious hospitality. Your brother's indiscretion is unpardonable, it drives me to the utmost desperation."

"Well," said Lothario, taking him by the hand, "just suppose that your marrying my sister was the secret condition for Therese's agreeing to give me her hand? This was the compensation that noble girl designed for you: she swore that both pairs should go to the altar on the same day. 'His mind chose me,' she said, 'but his heart demands Natalie, and my mind will go to the assistance of his heart.' We agreed to observe you and Natalie, we confided in the Abbé and had to promise him not to take any steps to further your union but rather let things run their own course. This we have done. Nature did the job, and my crazy brother only shook down the ripe fruit. Since we encountered each other in such an extraordinary way, let us not live ordinary lives, let us work together in a worthy enterprise. It is beyond belief what a cultivated man can achieve for himself and others, if, without trying to lord it over others, he has the temperament to be the guardian of many, helping them to find the right occasion to do what they would all like to do, and guiding them toward the goals they have clearly in mind without knowing how to reach them. Let us then join together in a common purpose—that is not mere enthusiasm, but an idea which can quite well be put into practice, and is indeed often implemented, though not always consciously. My sister Natalie is a living example of this. The ideal of human activity which Nature has prescribed for her beautiful soul will always remain unattainable. She deserves this name more than many others—more even, if I may say so, than our noble aunt, who, when our good doctor assembled that manuscript, was the most beautiful personality we knew. But since then Natalie has developed, and everybody must rejoice at such a person."

He was going to continue, but Friedrich came running into the room, shouting: "What sort of garland have I earned? How will you reward me? Bind together myrtle, laurel, ivy, oak leaves—the freshest you can find. There are so many merits in me for you to crown. Natalie is yours! And I'm the sorcerer who raised the treasure!"

"He's crazy," said Wilhelm. "I'm leaving."

"Have you authority to speak?" Lothario asked Friedrich, keeping a firm hold on Wilhelm.

"Yes, on my own behalf, and by the grace of God, if you will; I was the intermediary, and now I'm the emissary. I listened at the door; she revealed it all to the Abbé."

"How disgraceful!" said Lothario. "Who told you to eavesdrop?"

"Who told her to shut herself in?" replied Friedrich. "I heard it all very clearly. Natalie was in quite a state. During that night when the child seemed so ill and was lying half on her bosom, with you sitting glumly there in front of her and sharing the precious burden, she made a vow that if the child should die, she would acknowledge her love and offer you her hand in marriage. Now the child is alive, why should she change her intentions? A promise once made should be kept under all conditions. Here comes the parson to surprise us with the news!"

The Abbé entered. "We know everything," said Friedrich. "Make it short. Your appearance is just a formality, we don't need you gentlemen anymore!"

"He eavesdropped," said Lothario.

"How improper!" exclaimed the Abbé.

"Hurry up!" said Friedrich. "How are the ceremonies to be? Pretty thin; you can count them on five fingers." And turning to Wilhelm, he said: "You have to start on your journey: the Marchese's invitation is very timely! Once you are on the other side of the Alps, everybody will be here, thanking you for all the wonderful things you will be doing, which will provide them with free entertainment. It's as if you were giving an open party to which persons of every station in life can come!"

"You have certainly had great success with the public in providing popular entertainment," the Abbé replied. "It seems as if I shall never get to speak today."

"If everything doesn't turn out as I say," said Friedrich, "then suggest something better. Come here and look at them—and let's be happy!"

Lothario put his arm around his friend. He led him up to his sister, who came toward them with Therese. Nobody said a word.

"Don't delay!" said Friedrich. "You can be ready to leave in a couple of days. Did you ever imagine, my friend," he said, turning to Wilhelm, "when we first met and I asked you for that lovely bouquet, that you would ever receive such a flower as this from me?"

"Don't remind me of those days at this happiest of all moments," Wilhelm replied.

"But you should no more be ashamed of those days than you should be of your parentage. Those times were good times: and I must laugh when I look at you now. You seem to me like Saul, the son of Kish, who went in search of his father's asses, and found a kingdom."

"I don't know about kingdoms," said Wilhelm, "but I do know that I have found a treasure I never deserved. And I would not exchange it for anything in the world."

Journeyman Years or The Renunciants

Book One

Chapter One

The Flight into Egypt

Overshadowed by a mighty cliff, Wilhelm was sitting at a fearsome, significant spot, where the precipitous mountain path turned a corner and began a swift descent. The sun was still high in the sky, illuminating the tops of the spruces in the rocky ravines below. He was just making a notation in his writing tablet when Felix, who had been scrambling about, approached him with a rock in his hand. "What is this stone called, Father?" the boy asked.

"I do not know," Wilhelm replied.

"Could this be gold, the shiny part?" the boy wondered.

"No, it is not," the father responded, "and now I remember that people call it fool's gold."

"Fool's gold?" said the boy with a smile, "And why is that?"

"Probably because whoever takes it for gold is a fool."

"I will remember that," said the lad and stowed the rock away in his leather pouch. But he promptly produced another object and asked, "What is this?"

"A fruit of some sort," his father replied, "and to judge by its scales it must be related to the pine cone."

"But it does not look like a cone; it is round."

"Let us ask the huntsman; those fellows know everything about the forest and all the fruits. They know how to sow, to plant, and to wait; then they let the shoots grow and develop as they can."

"The huntsmen know everything; yesterday the guide showed me where a stag had crossed the path; he called me back and pointed out the spoor, as he called it. I had skipped right past it, but now I clearly saw the imprint of hooves—it must have been a large stag."

"I heard you interrogating the guide."

"He knew a lot, and he is not even a huntsman. But I wish I could be a huntsman. It is so wonderful to be in the forest all day long, to hear the birds, to know their names and where they nest, to know how to remove their eggs or their young, how to feed them or capture the parents: that is such a lark."

He had barely concluded when a curious sight appeared on the rugged path. Two boys, as lovely as a summer day, in bright little jackets that looked almost like open shirts, came gamboling downhill, one after the other.

Wilhelm had an opportunity to inspect them more closely when they stopped short at the sight of him and stood motionless for a moment. The older boy's head was wreathed in thick golden curls, the first feature that struck the observer; next one noticed the boy's clear blue eyes, and finally one became absorbed in his beauty. The second lad, in appearance more a friend than a brother, was graced with straight brown shoulder-length hair, whose color seemed mirrored in his eyes.

Wilhelm had no time to examine further these two remarkable beings, so unexpected in the wilderness, for he heard a man's voice calling in serious but friendly tones from around the corner, "Why have you stopped? Do not block the way!"

Wilhelm looked up the path, and surprised though he had been by the children, he was amazed at what now presented itself to him. A sturdy, capable young man, not overly tall, in shirtsleeves, with bronzed skin and black hair, came striding firmly yet cautiously down the mountain path, leading a donkey. At first only its well-nourished and well-groomed head could be seen, but then its lovely burden came into view, a gentle, appealing woman mounted on a large, ornamented saddle. Nestled in the blue cape that enveloped her was an infant, which she pressed to her bosom and gazed down at with ineffable sweetness. The leader responded as the children had: he paused in surprise when he spied Wilhelm. The animal slowed its steps, but the slope was too steep, the passers-by could not stop, and Wilhelm watched in astonishment as they vanished around the projecting cliff.

It was only natural that this rare apparition should distract him from his train of thought. Filled with curiosity, he stood up and looked down below to see whether they might not come into view again. And he was just about to descend and greet these strange wayfarers, when Felix came back up the path and said, "Father, may I go home with the children? They want to take me with them. And you are to come, too, the man told me. Come! They are waiting down there."

"I will speak with them," Wilhelm replied.

He found them at a spot where the path was not quite so steep, and devoured with his eyes the extraordinary figures that had so caught his attention. Only now could he make out particular details. The

robust young man was in fact carrying an adz on his shoulder and a long, slender iron square. The children held large bundles of reeds, as if they were palm fronds, and if they resembled angels in this respect, they also carried little baskets of food, and thus resembled the guides who daily ply back and forth over the mountains. And the mother wore, as he saw when he regarded her more closely, a rosy, delicately tinted shift beneath her blue cloak, so that our friend to his amazement found the Flight into Egypt, which he had so often seen painted, here before his very eyes.

They exchanged greetings, and since Wilhelm was so astonished and fascinated that words failed him, the young man remarked, "Our children have already made friends in this short moment. Would you care to come along with us, to see whether good relations may not also spring up among the adults?"

Wilhelm reflected briefly and then replied, "The sight of your little family procession awakens trust and liking, and, let me at once admit, in equal measure both curiosity and a lively desire to be better acquainted with you. Indeed, one wonders at first whether you are real travelers or merely spirits that delight in enlivening these inhospitable mountains with pleasant apparitions."

"Then come along with us to our dwelling," the young man said. "Come along!" shouted the children, as they pulled Felix away with them. "Come along!" said the woman, turning her expression of sweet friendliness from the infant to Wilhelm.

Without hesitation Wilhelm replied, "I am sorry that I cannot follow you at once. This night at least I must still spend up above in the border lodge. My portmanteau, my papers—everything is still up there, unpacked and unguarded. But to demonstrate my wish and my willingness to accede to your kind invitation, I shall give you my Felix as security. Tomorrow I will join you. How far is it from here?"

"We will reach our home before sundown," the carpenter replied, "and from the border lodge you have only another hour and a half. Your boy shall join our household for tonight; tomorrow we will expect you."

The man and the beast started off. Wilhelm was pleased to see his Felix in such good company; he was now able to compare him with the dear little angels, from whom Felix stood out markedly. He was not large for his years, but sturdy, with broad chest and powerful shoulders; his nature was an odd combination of leader and follower: he had already snatched up a palm frond and a little basket, which seemed to express both qualities. The procession was on the point of vanishing again around an escarpment when Wilhelm pulled himself together and called out, "How shall I ask the way?"

"Just ask for Saint Joseph," rang out from below, and the entire apparition had vanished behind the blue walls of shadow. From the distance a devout song floated up, sung in several parts, and Wilhelm thought he could distinguish the voice of his Felix.

He ascended the path and in this manner delayed the sunset. The heavenly body, which he had lost more than once, shone upon him again as he mounted, and it was still day when he reached his lodging. Once more he gazed with pleasure on the magnificent mountainscape, and then withdrew to his chamber, where he promptly took up his pen and passed part of the night in writing.

Wilhelm to Natalie

Now at last the summit has been reached, the summit of the mountain range that will separate us more powerfully than all the regions traversed thus far. To my mind, we are still near our loved ones so long as the rivers still run from us to them. Today I can still imagine that the twig I toss into the forest brook might well float down to her, might in a few days' time wash ashore at the foot of her garden; and thus our soul sends its images, the heart its sentiments, more easily downwards. But on the other side, I fear, a dividing wall will obstruct my imagination and emotions. Yet perhaps my anxiety is too hasty: in all likelihood it will be no different on the other side. What could separate me from you! from you, to whom I belong forever, even if a singular fate parts me from you and unexpectedly bars the gates of the paradise to which I had come so near. I had time to compose myself, and yet no time would have sufficed, had I not received this composure from your mouth, from your lips, in that decisive moment. How could I have torn myself away, had not the enduring thread been spun that shall bind us for all time and all eternity? But I may not speak of this. I do not wish to violate your gentle commandments; on this summit let it be the last time I utter the word separation before you. My life is to become a journey. I must undertake the strange obligations of the journeyman and undergo trials meant for me alone. How I smile sometimes when I read over the conditions that the league, that I myself established! Some of them are observed, some violated, but even as I violate them, this document, this record of my last confession, my last absolution, serves in place of a stern conscience, and I return to my path. I watch my step, and my errors no longer tumble one over the other like the mountain waters.

Yet I will freely admit that I often admire those teachers and leaders of men who impose only external, mechanical tasks upon their disciples. They make it easy for themselves and for the world. For it is

precisely this portion of the requirements, which at first seemed to me the most irksome, the most strange, that I now regard as the most comfortable and hold most dear.

I am not to remain more than three days under the same roof. I am not to leave my lodging without traveling at least one mile from the spot. These commandments are calculated to make my years true journeyman years and to forestall the least temptation to settle anywhere. Until now I have observed this rule strictly, indeed have not made use of the leeway accorded me. This is actually the first time I have lingered, the first time I shall sleep for a third night in the same bed. From here I dispatch to you assorted information, observations, impressions I have collected, and then tomorrow begin the descent to the other side, first to visit an extraordinary family, a holy family I might call it, about which you will find more in my journal. For now, farewell, and lay this letter aside with the sense that it has only *one* thing to say, wishes to repeat only *one* thing, over and over again, but will not say it, will not repeat it, until I have the good fortune to kneel once more at your feet and to pour out my heart to you for the great deprivation I have endured.

In the morning.

Everything is packed. The guide is strapping my portmanteau onto the pack frame. The sun has not yet risen, mists billow up from every ravine; but the heavens above are clear. We are about to descend into the dark depths, which will also soon clear up above our heads. Let me send my last sigh across to you! Let my last gaze in your direction be filled with involuntary tears! I am bound and determined: you shall hear no more laments from me; you shall hear only of the wanderer's encounters. And yet, even as I make ready to close this letter, a thousand thoughts, wishes, hopes, and intentions crowd upon me again. Fortunately I am being driven away. The guide is calling, and the innkeeper has already begun to tidy up, as if I were gone, just as unfeeling, thoughtless heirs take no pains to conceal from the departing that they are about to take possession.

Chapter Two

Saint Joseph the Second

Following close on the heels of the guide, the wanderer had already left steep cliffs behind and above him; already they were traversing

gentler hills and hastening through many a fine stand of trees, over many a pleasant meadow, ever onwards, until they finally found themselves on a slope looking down into a carefully cultivated valley, ringed all around by hills. The eye was immediately drawn to a large monastery, part of which lay in ruins, the other part of which was well preserved. "This is Saint Joseph," said the guide; "a terrible shame about the beautiful church! See how well the columns and pillars are preserved, showing through brush and trees, even though the church has lain in ruins for hundreds of years."

As they spoke, they had passed through the open gate into the spacious courtyard which, surrounded by stately, well-maintained structures, revealed that order and calm reigned here. Wilhelm at once spied his Felix and the angels of the previous day busy around a pack basket which a sturdy woman had set down beside her; they were buying cherries, but Felix, who always carried some money with him, was doing the actual dickering. Now he, the guest, promptly played host, giving fruit generously to his playmates, and even his father was glad of this refreshment in the midst of these barren, mossy woodlands, where the colorful, gleaming fruit looked all the more luscious. She had to carry the cherries up from a large orchard far below, the woman said in defense of her price, which her buyers had thought rather high. Their father would be back soon, the children said; Wilhelm should go right into the hall and rest.

But how astonished Wilhelm was when the children led him into the room they called the hall. A wide door opened directly into it from the courtyard, and the wanderer found himself inside a very clean, well-preserved chapel, which, however, as he at once saw, was arranged for daily domestic use. On one side stood a table, an armchair, and several chairs and benches, on the other a handsomely carved hutch filled with gay crockery, pitchers, and glasses. There were also several chests and trunks, and tidy though everything was, the room still had the inviting air of a place that was lived in. Light entered through high windows in the side walls. But what most struck the wanderer were colorful pictures painted on the walls, extending like hangings over three sides of the room, reaching from just below the windows down to the wainscot that covered the rest of the wall to the floor. The paintings portrayed the story of St. Joseph. Here you saw him busy at his carpentry; here he encountered Mary, and a lily sprouted from the ground between them, while several angels hovered attentively around them. Here he is being married, then comes the Annunciation. Here he sits disgruntled, surrounded by unfinished work, his adz idle as he considers parting from his wife. But next the angel appears to him in a dream, and his circumstances change. He gazes with reverence upon the newborn child in the manger at Bethlehem and worships it. Soon

afterward comes a strangely beautiful picture. It shows several pieces of worked wood about to be assembled; by chance, two of the pieces form a cross. The child has fallen asleep on the cross, while the mother sits beside him, gazing on him with deep devotion, and the foster father pauses in his work so as not to disturb the infant's slumber. The Flight into Egypt follows next. It evoked a smile from the contemplative wanderer as he saw the living tableau of the previous day repeated here on the wall.

He had little time to pursue his reflections, for soon his host entered; Wilhelm at once recognized him as the leader of the holy caravan. They greeted one another most warmly, and conversation on various topics ensued; but Wilhelm's attention remained fixed on the paintings. His host noticed his interest and began with a smile, "Surely you are wondering at the correspondence between this building and its occupants, whom you encountered yesterday. But it is perhaps even more curious than one might suspect: in actuality the building created its occupants. For if the inanimate is full of life, it can bring forth something alive."

"Oh, yes," Wilhelm replied, "it would surprise me to hear that the spirit that worked with such force in these desolate mountains hundreds of years ago and attracted to itself such a mighty body of buildings, estates, and privileges, from which the blessings of culture spread through the region—it would surprise me if it did not still exert a vital influence on living beings even from amidst these ruins. But let us not dwell too long on the general; acquaint me with your own story, that I may understand how, without frivolity or presumption, the past could come alive again in you and that which had passed on reappear."

Just as Wilhelm was expecting an explanation from the lips of his host, a friendly voice in the courtyard called out the name Joseph. The host listened and went to the door.

"So his name is Joseph, too," Wilhelm said to himself. "That is certainly odd enough, and yet not so odd as the fact that he portrays his saint in his own life." At this moment he looked toward the door and saw the man talking with the Mother of God from the previous day. At last they separated, and the woman started for the dwelling across the way. "Marie," he called after her, "just one more thing!"

"So she is even named Marie," Wilhelm thought; "I almost feel as though I had been transported back eighteen hundred years." He contemplated the solemn, secluded valley to which he had come, the ruins and the stillness, and an extraordinary sense of antiquity stole over him. It was just as well that his host and the children entered. The children invited Wilhelm for a walk, while the husbandman attended to a few matters. They strolled among the ruins of the church, with its many pillars; its towering gables and walls seemed to have been

reinforced in wind and weather, for stout trees had long ago taken root atop the thick walls and, along with grasses, flowers, and moss, presented the appearance of exotic hanging gardens. Gentle meadow paths followed the course of a lively brook, and from a little higher the traveler could overlook the entire structure and its site, viewing it with the greater interest inasmuch as its occupants had become yet more remarkable to him, and their harmony with their surroundings had awakened his intense curiosity.

The little group returned and found a table laid in the consecrated hall. At its head stood an armchair in which the mistress of the house took her place. Next to her was a large basket in which lay the infant; then came the father to her left and Wilhelm to her right. The three children occupied the lower end of the table. An old serving woman brought in a carefully prepared repast. The dishes and goblets likewise evoked earlier times. The children provided occasion for conversation, while Wilhelm did not tire of contemplating the form and demeanor of his holy hostess.

After dinner the company broke up. The host led his guest to a shaded part of the ruins where, from an elevated spot, they had a pleasing view down the entire valley and saw the lower mountains beyond spreading into the distance with fertile slopes and wooded ridges. "It is only proper," began the host, "that I should satisfy your curiosity, the more so as I sense that you can take a serious view of things that appear odd, so long as they prove serious at bottom. This religious institution, whose remains you see, was consecrated to the Holy Family, and used to be a famous place of pilgrimage because of the many miracles that took place here. The church was dedicated to the Mother and the Son. It was destroyed several centuries ago. The chapel, dedicated to the Holy Foster Father, survived, as did the usable section of the monastery buildings. For many years now the revenues have gone to a secular prince, who maintains a steward here, and that is who I am, the son of the previous steward, who likewise followed his father in the position.

"Although all religious observances ceased here long ago, St. Joseph was always so generous to our family that it is not surprising we had a particular fondness for him; thus it was that I was christened Joseph and thereby more or less had my life's course set for me. As I grew up, I often joined my father when he went to collect the rents, but it gave me even greater pleasure to accompany my mother, who regularly dispensed charity, to the extent her means allowed, and was known and loved throughout the mountains for her kindness and her good deeds. She dispatched me hither and yon to make deliveries, give instructions, look after things, and I took readily to this pious calling.

"On the whole, there is something more humane about life in the mountains than in the flatlands. The inhabitants are closer to one another and, if you will, also farther apart; their needs are simpler but more pressing. Each person must rely more upon himself, must learn to depend on his own hands, his own feet. Workman, courier, porter—all are combined in one person; everyone is also closer to his neighbor, sees him more often, and is engaged with him in a common venture.

"While I was still young, and my shoulders could not bear heavy loads, I had the idea of equipping a little donkey with baskets and driving him up and down the steep footpaths. In the mountains the donkey is not the contemptible animal he is in the flatlands, where the farmhand who plows with a horse considers himself superior to one who draws his furrows with oxen. And I had even fewer compunctions about making my rounds with the donkey because I had already noticed in the chapel that this animal had had the honor of carrying Our Lord and His mother. But this chapel was not yet in the condition in which it is now. It was used as a shed, almost as a stable. Firewood, poles, implements, barrels and ladders, and what have you were crammed in any which way. It was sheer good fortune that the paintings are so high and that the wainscoting can take mistreatment. But even as a child I loved to climb around on the lumber and look at the pictures, which no one could really interpret for me. It was enough to know that the saint whose life they depicted was my patron saint, and I rejoiced in him as I would have in an uncle. I was growing up, and because it was stipulated that the person who aspired to the lucrative office of steward must have a trade, my parents, who hoped to pass on to me this excellent living, urged me to learn a trade, and one that would be useful in maintaining the household up here.

"My father was a cooper, and whenever work of this sort needed doing, he attended to it himself, a most advantageous arrangement for all concerned. Yet I could not decide to follow him in it. I was irresistibly drawn toward carpentry, the tools for which I had since my childhood seen so painstakingly and accurately depicted beside my saint. I declared my wish; no objections were raised, the more so because we often needed a carpenter for all sorts of construction, and a carpenter with a taste and a talent for fine work might easily find himself—especially in forest regions—doing cabinetry and even carving. What strengthened me in my aspiration was one painting, which by now is unfortunately almost wholly obliterated. Once you know its subject matter, however, you will be able to decipher it when I show it to you. St. Joseph received no less a commission than to make a throne for King Herod. The great seat is to be positioned between two existing columns. Joseph carefully measures the length and width and builds a magnificent royal throne. But how astonished he is, how cha-

grined, when he delivers the splendid seat: it is too high and too narrow. As we know, King Herod was not one to be trifled with; the devout master carpenter is sorely troubled. The Christ Child, who accompanies him everywhere, carrying his tools in humble child's play, sees his need and at once comes to his aid. The miraculous child directs his foster father to take hold of one side of the throne, while he himself grasps the carving on the other, and both begin to pull. Quickly and easily, as if made of leather, the throne extends in breadth, loses height proportionately, and now fits perfectly into place, to the immense relief of the master carpenter and the complete satisfaction of the king.

"In my youth that throne could still be made out clearly, and from what remains of one side you will be able to see that no pains were spared with the carving—which of course must have been easier for the painter than it would have been for a carpenter, if anyone had demanded it of him.

"But none of this gave me a moment's pause; indeed, I so greatly respected the trade to which I had dedicated myself that I could hardly wait to be placed as an apprentice. This proved easy, because a master carpenter lived nearby; he did work for the entire region and could employ several journeymen and apprentices. So I remained close to my parents and to an extent continued my previous life, devoting my free time and holidays to the charitable errands on which my mother continued to send me."

The Visitation

"Thus several years passed," the man continued his story. "I soon recognized the advantages of my trade, and my body, molded by work, could meet all the demands made in the course of it. In addition, I performed my previous service to my good mother, or rather, to the sick and needy. I traveled throughout the mountains with my donkey, distributed my cargo conscientiously, and brought back from shopkeepers and merchants what we lacked up here. My master was content with me, as were my parents. On my journeys I already had the satisfaction of passing a number of houses that I had helped to build, that I had decorated. For the final notching of the beams, carving simple designs, burning decorative figures into the wood, accenting grooves in red—all these humble arts which give a wooden chalet its cheery appearance—were assigned to me, because I was the most skillful at them, since I had ever before my mind's eye Herod's throne and its ornamentation.

"Among the needy persons for whom my mother had a particular concern, young women with child occupied a special position; I grad-

ually came to realize this, although in such cases the actual missions were kept secret from me. I was never given a direct assignment; instead, everything was done through a good woman who lived a short distance down the valley and was called Dame Elisabeth. My mother, herself skilled in that art which has rescued for life so many children as they tottered on the threshold, maintained a cordial exchange with Dame Elisabeth, and I often heard from all sides that many a one of our sturdy mountain folk owed his existence to these two women. The secretiveness with which Dame Elisabeth always received me, the laconic answers to my puzzled questions, which I myself did not wholly comprehend, filled me with a curious awe of her, and her house, which was spotlessly clean, seemed to me a small sanctuary of sorts.

"In the meanwhile my competence and craftsmanship had gained me a certain influence in the family. As my father, in his capacity as cooper, had equipped the cellar, I now attended to the roof over our heads, and repaired many dilapidated sections of the old buildings. In particular I managed to restore a number of tumbledown barns and sheds for household use; and as soon as these were done, I began to clear out and clean my beloved chapel. In a few days it was in order, almost as you see it now; I took great pains to restore the missing or damaged sections of the wainscoting to match the rest. And you probably think that the double doors at the entrance are original, but in fact they are my work. I spent several years carving them in my leisure hours, having first carefully assembled them from stout oaken planks. Those sections of the paintings which had not faded or been damaged have been preserved, and I helped the master glazier with a new building, on the condition that he make stained-glass windows for me.

"If previously the pictures and thoughts about the life of the saint had occupied my imagination, they impressed themselves even more vividly upon me now that I could regard the space once more as a sanctuary and could linger there, especially in summertime, pondering what I saw or surmised. I felt an irresistible urge to follow in the footsteps of this saint, and since similar circumstances could not be conjured up at will, I wished at least to begin to resemble him in the fundamental details, as indeed I had long since begun to resemble him through my beast of burden. I was no longer content with the little creature I had used hitherto; I found myself a much finer pack animal, procured a handsomely made saddle equally suited to a rider or a load. I purchased a pair of new panniers; and a web of colorful cord, tufts, and tassels with little jingling metal disks adorned the neck of the long-eared beast, which now could hold its own with its model on the chapel wall. No one dreamt of mocking me as I journeyed through the mountains thus outfitted, for people readily concede charity's right to an eccentric guise.

"In the meantime, war, or rather its consequences, had drawn near our region. Several times dangerous bands of marauding deserters came together and committed here and there acts of violence or malice. Thanks to the local militia, to patrols and heightened vigilance, the evil was soon contained; but people too quickly let down their guard, and before we knew it, new mischief broke out again.

"It had been peaceful in our region for some time, and I was calmly plying the accustomed paths with my pack mule, when one day I crossed the freshly seeded clearing and came upon a female figure seated, or rather lying, on the edge of the surrounding ditch. She seemed to be asleep or in a swoon. I busied myself about her, and as she opened her lovely eyes and sat up, she exclaimed eagerly, 'Where is he? Have you seen him?' 'Whom?' I asked, and she replied, 'My husband.' Given her youthful appearance, the answer was unexpected, but I offered her my assistance all the more gladly, and assured her of my concern. I learned that because of the bad roads the two travelers had left their carriage and set out by a more direct footpath. Near this spot they had been attacked by armed men. Her husband had drawn his sword and attempted to drive the ruffians off. She had not been able to keep up with him, and had remained lying there, she knew not how long. She begged me to leave her and hasten after her husband. She rose to her feet, and the most beautiful, appealing figure stood before me; but I could easily see that she was in a condition that would soon require the ministrations of my mother and Dame Elisabeth. We disputed for a short while, for I insisted that I first bring her to safety, while she insisted that she first have news of her husband. She refused to leave his trail, and all my urgings would probably have come to naught if a squad of militia had not come riding toward us through the forest just then, they having heard that trouble was afoot. I told them what had occurred, made the necessary arrangements with them, agreed on a rendezvous, and thus settled the matter for the present. I quickly concealed my panniers in a nearby cave which I had often used for storage, converted my saddle to a comfortable seat, and, not without a peculiar sensation, lifted the lovely burden onto my willing animal, which could follow the familiar paths on its own, and thus gave me the opportunity to walk alongside.

"You can imagine, without lengthy descriptions, how strange I felt. I had actually found that which I had so long sought. It was as if I were dreaming, and then again as though I were awakening from a dream. This divine figure, which I seemed to see floating in the air and moving against a backdrop of green trees, was like something out of a dream generated in my soul by those paintings in the chapel. At moments these pictures seemed to have been merely dreams, which now gave way to an exquisite reality. I asked her a number of questions,

and she answered gently and pleasantly, in a tone befitting one who is properly downcast. Several times when we reached a treeless elevation she asked me to stop, to look around, to listen. She asked with such grace, with such fervent pleading in her eyes, with their long, dark lashes, that I did everything possible; I even scaled a tall, branchless spruce that stood alone. Never had I been more grateful for this special skill of my trade; never had it given me greater satisfaction to retrieve a ribbon or silk scarf from a similar treetop at a fair or festival. But this time, alas, I came away without a prize; even from my high perch I saw and heard nothing. Finally she herself called me to come down, and even beckoned vigorously. Indeed, when I slid down, and let go at a fair height and leaped to the ground, she uttered a cry, and a look of sweet goodwill spread over her face when she saw me standing before her unharmed.

"Why should I tell you at length the hundreds of attentions I showered upon her, trying to win her favor and distract her. And indeed how could I! For it is the nature of true attentiveness that it transforms mere nothings into everything. To me the flowers I plucked for her, the distant parts I pointed out to her, the mountains, the forests I identified for her, were like so many precious treasures I wished to bestow on her, in order to forge a bond between us, as one tries to do with gifts.

"She had already won my heart forever when we reached the village and the door of that good woman, where I knew already that I faced a painful parting. Once more my eyes traveled over her entire form, and when they reached her feet, I bent over, as though to adjust the girth, and kissed the most charming little shoe I had ever seen, but without her noticing it. I helped her down, dashed up the steps, and called in through the front door, 'Dame Elisabeth, you are receiving a visitation!'

"The good woman came out, and I watched over her shoulders from the doorway as the lovely creature mounted the steps with a sweet air of sorrow and innate dignity, then embraced my excellent old woman, and allowed herself to be escorted to her best room. They closed the door behind them, and I stood there outside with my donkey like someone who has just unloaded precious wares, and finds himself as poor a drover as before."

The Lily Stalk

"I was still hesitating to depart, for I was undecided as to what I should do, when Dame Elisabeth came to the door and requested that I summon my mother to her, then go out and if possible bring back tidings

of the husband. 'Marie beseeches you to do this,' she said. 'Can I not speak with her myself, just once more?' I responded. 'That may not be,' Dame Elisabeth said, and we parted.

"In a short while I reached our home; my mother was ready to go down that very evening and assist the young stranger. I hurried down to the valley, hoping I could obtain reliable information from the bailiff. But he himself was still in uncertainty, and because he knew me, he bade me pass the night with him. That night was interminably long, and through it all I saw before me that lovely form, swaying on the animal's back and looking down at me with such a sorrowful, friendly expression. Every moment I hoped for news. I did not begrudge the good husband his life, I wished it for him, and yet I did so like to think of her as a widow.

"The roving patrol gradually reassembled, and after various contradictory rumors, it finally became certain that the coach had been rescued, but that the unfortunate husband had died of his wounds in the neighboring village. I also learned that, as previously agreed, some of them had gone to bring this sad news to Dame Elisabeth. That meant that I had nothing more to do or to accomplish there, and yet boundless impatience, immeasurable longing, drove me through mountains and forests back to her door. It was night, the house shut tight. I saw light in the rooms, saw shadows moving across the curtains, and so I sat on a bench across the way, always on the verge of knocking and always restrained by various considerations.

"But why should I recount in such detail what is really of no interest. To be brief, on the following morning I was not allowed in either. The sad news was known, I was superfluous; I was to return to my father, to my work. My questions remained unanswered; my presence was not wanted.

"This treatment continued for a week, until finally Dame Elisabeth called me inside. 'Come on tiptoe, my friend,' she said, 'but do come in!' She led me to an immaculate room, where through half-drawn bedcurtains in the corner I could see my fair one, sitting upright. Dame Elisabeth went to her, as if to announce me, lifted something from the bed, and brought it toward me: swaddled in the whitest linen, the most beautiful little boy. Dame Elisabeth held him exactly halfway between me and the mother, and at once there occurred to me the lily stalk in the picture, rising from the earth between Mary and Joseph in testimony of their purity. From that moment all burdens were lifted from my heart; I felt certain of my cause, of my happiness. I could approach her freely, speak with her, bear her heavenly gaze, take the boy in my arms and press a heartfelt kiss on his brow.

" 'How I thank you for your affection for this orphaned child!' the mother said. Without a moment's reflection, I exclaimed, 'He is an orphan no longer, if you are but willing!'

"Dame Elisabeth, more prudent than I, took the child from me and sent me on my way.

"Memories of that time still serve as my happiest entertainment when I am obliged to travel through our mountains and valleys. I can still recall the smallest circumstance, though I shall spare you the details, as is proper. Weeks passed; Marie had recovered, and I was permitted to see her quite often. My intercourse with her was a succession of services and attentions. Her personal circumstances allowed her to live where she wished. First she remained with Dame Elisabeth; then she visited us, to thank my mother and me for so much and such friendly assistance. She enjoyed being with us, and I flattered myself that it was partly on my account. But that which I would so gladly have spoken and yet did not dare to speak found expression in a curious and charming fashion when I led her into the chapel, which I had already transformed into a livable space. I showed her the pictures and explained them one at a time, dwelling on the duties of a foster father in such a lively and heartfelt manner that tears came to her eyes and I could not finish my exposition. I was confident of her affection, although I was not so presumptuous as to expect to obliterate her memories of her husband so soon. The law imposes a year of mourning on widows, and such a period, which comprehends the cycle of earthly change, is certainly necessary for a feeling heart to overcome the painful impressions of a great loss. One sees the blossoms fade and the leaves fall, but one also sees fruit ripen and new buds swell. Life belongs to the living, and he who lives must be prepared for change.

"I now spoke with my mother about this matter, so close to my heart. She thereupon revealed to me how painfully Marie had been affected by her husband's death, and how only the thought that she must live for her child's sake had sustained her. My love had not remained hidden from the women, and Marie had already accustomed herself to the idea of living with us. She lingered in the neighborhood a short while longer; then she came up to us, and we continued for a while in the most devout and blissful betrothal.

"At last we were married. That first feeling that had brought us together did not wane. The duties and joys of a foster father and a father were joined; and though to be sure our little family surpassed its model in number as it grew, nevertheless the virtues of that ideal image of fidelity and purity were revered and practiced by us. And so we preserve as a pleasant custom the outward appearance, upon which we happened by chance, and which corresponds so well to our inner inclinations: for although we are all good walkers and sturdy bearers, the beast of burden remains ever with us, to carry some load or another, whenever a transaction or visit takes us through these mountains and

valleys. As you found us yesterday, so we are known throughout the region, and we are proud that our way of life is such as to bring no shame upon those holy names and figures to whose imitation we dedicate ourselves."

Chapter Three

Wilhelm to Natalie

I have just completed a pleasant, almost miraculous tale, which I transcribed for you from the mouth of a most excellent man. If the words are not exactly his, if here and there I have expressed my own sentiments as his, that is only natural, given the affinity I feel for him. The reverence for his wife—does it not resemble that which I feel for you? and does not the very coming together of these two lovers bear a resemblance to ours? But he has the good fortune to walk beside the beast that bears the doubly beautiful burden; when evening comes, he can accompany his family procession through the old cloister gate; he is inseparable from his beloved, from his dear ones. For all that I may be permitted to envy him in secret. But I am not even permitted to bemoan my fate, since I promised you to keep silent and endure, as you also took upon yourself.

I must pass over many a lovely feature in the shared lives of these devout and serene people, for how could I write it all? A few days have passed pleasantly for me, but now the third admonishes me to be on my way.

Felix and I had a little tiff today, for he tried to induce me to violate one of the commitments I made to you. It is my failing, my misfortune, my fate that willy-nilly the company around me grows, that I often take on a new burden that I am thenceforth obligated to carry, or drag, along with me. Now, on this journey no third person is supposed to become our constant companion. We desire and ought to be but two, and should remain so, and just now a new and not altogether gratifying liaison seemed to be in the making.

The children of the house, with whom Felix has enjoyed playing these last few days, were joined by a lively little poor boy, who allowed himself to be used and misused as the game required, and who quickly won Felix's favor. And I could already guess from various remarks that Felix had chosen a playmate for the coming journey. The boy is well known about these parts, is tolerated everywhere because of his high spirits and receives occasional alms. But I did not like him, and

I asked the master of the house to send him on his way. That was then done, but Felix was cross about it, and there was a little scene.

On this occasion I made a pleasant discovery. In one corner of the chapel, or hall, stood a box of stones, which Felix, who has developed a passionate interest in rocks since our journey through the mountains, eagerly pulled out and inspected. There were some beautiful and striking pieces. Our host said the child might choose what he liked. The stones were left over from a large quantity which a stranger had recently shipped from here. He called him Montan, and you can imagine that I was delighted to hear this name, under which one of our best friends is traveling, a man to whom we owe much. I enquired as to the time and the circumstances, and can now hope to encounter him soon on my journey.

The news that Montan was in the vicinity had made Wilhelm reflective. He considered that it ought not be left to chance whether he should see such a valued friend again, and therefore he inquired of his host whether anyone knew which path the traveler had taken. No one had any precise information, and Wilhelm had already decided to continue according to his original plan, when Felix exclaimed, "If you were not so stubborn, Father, we could find Montan easily." "How so?" Wilhelm asked. Felix replied, "Little Fitz said yesterday that he could probably trace the gentleman who had the beautiful rocks with him and knew so much about them." After some discussion back and forth, Wilhelm finally decided to make the attempt, but to keep an even closer eye on the questionable boy. He was soon found, and when he learned what was intended, brought along a mallet and chisel, and a sturdy hammer, as well as a small sack, and darted merrily on ahead in his miner's garb.

Their way took them off to the side, again up the mountain. The children bounded from rock to rock, up hill and down dale, over brooks and springs, and without any path before him Fitz pressed quickly onward, glancing to right and left. Since Wilhelm and especially the guide with his heavy pack could not follow so quickly, the boys kept getting ahead and running back, singing and whistling. The form of some unfamiliar trees caught Felix's attention; he now made his first acquaintance with the larch and the arolla pine, and he was fascinated by the wonderful gentians. And so there was no lack of entertainment on the arduous journey.

Suddenly little Fitz stood still and listened. He beckoned the others to him: "Do you hear tapping?" he said. "It is the sound of a hammer striking the rock." "We hear it," answered the others. "That is Montan!" he said, "or someone who can give us word of him." As they followed the sound, which was repeated from time to time, they came to a

clearing and saw a steep, high, bare cliff towering over everything, leaving even the tall trees far below. On the summit they spied a person. He was too far away to be recognized. The children promptly set out to climb the steep path. Wilhelm followed with some difficulty, even danger; the person who goes up a cliff first is always safer, because he can seek out the best way, while the one who follows behind sees only what spot the other has reached, but not how he got there. The boys soon reached the summit, and Wilhelm heard a loud cry of joy. "It is Jarno!" Felix called down to his father, and Jarno at once stepped out onto a jagged promontory, offered a hand to his friend, and pulled him up. They embraced and greeted each other with delight under the open heavens.

But they had barely released one another when vertigo overcame Wilhelm, not only for himself, but because he saw the children hanging over the vast abyss. Jarno noticed and bade them all sit down at once. "Nothing is more natural," he said, "than that we should experience vertigo before an unexpected grand view, for it confronts us simultaneously with our own smallness and our grandeur. Yet there cannot be any true pleasure, except where one is at first overcome."

"Are those the high mountains down there that we have already climbed?" Felix asked. "How small they look! And here," he continued, prying a piece of rock loose from the summit, "is that fool's gold again; I suppose it is everywhere?" "It occurs far and wide," Jarno replied, "and since you ask about such things, you should note that you are now sitting on the oldest mountain formation, the oldest rock in the world." "Wasn't the world made all at once?" Felix asked. "Hardly," Montan replied; "Rome was not built in a day." "And so down there is an entirely different kind of rock," Felix said, "and another kind over there, and another and another!" as he pointed from the nearest mountains to the more distant ones and on down into the plain.

It was a very beautiful day, and Jarno made them survey the glorious view in detail. Here and there rose several peaks, similar to the one on which they sat. A mountain formation of medium height seemed to strive upward, but never approached their own elevation. Farther away the land grew flatter, but there, too, curious formations suddenly jutted up. In the far distance lakes and rivers became visible, and a fruitful plain stretched toward the horizon like an ocean. As the eye drew back, it plunged into fearsome depths, where waterfalls roared in a labyrinth of gorges.

Felix did not tire of asking questions, and Jarno was gracious enough to answer every one of them. Yet Wilhelm thought he detected that the teacher was not being entirely truthful and straightforward. When, therefore, the restless boys began to scramble about again, Wilhelm

said to his friend, "You did not speak with the child about these things the same way you speak with yourself about them." "That is asking a great deal," Jarno replied, "for after all, one does not always speak with oneself as one thinks, and it is one's duty to tell others only what they can comprehend. People understand only what suits them. The best one can do for children is to hold them to the present, to supply them with a label, a category. They will ask about causes soon enough in any case."

"You cannot blame them for that," replied Wilhelm. "The diversity among objects confuses everyone, and it is easier, instead of connecting them, to ask quickly, 'Where from?' 'Where to?' " "And yet," said Jarno, "since children see objects only superficially, you can also speak with them only superficially about development and purpose." "Most people," responded Wilhelm, "remain their whole life long in this condition and never reach that glorious stage in which what is easy to understand seems common and foolish." "You may well call it glorious," Jarno replied, "since it is a condition halfway between despair and deification." "Let us stay with the boy," Wilhelm answered, "who matters more to me now than anything else. He has become very interested in rocks since we have been traveling. Can you not communicate to me enough so that I can satisfy him, at least for a while?" "That is not possible," said Jarno. "In each new realm you must begin again as a child, attack the thing with passionate interest, enjoy the outer shell first, until you have the good fortune to reach the inner kernel."

"So tell me," replied Wilhelm, "how did you come by your knowledge and insight? It is not so long ago that we parted!" "My friend," Jarno replied, "we had to renounce, if not forever, at least for quite a while. The first thing that occurs to an able person under such circumstances is to begin a new life. New objects are not enough; they are good only for distraction. He requires a new whole, and promptly locates himself in the middle of it." "But why, then," Wilhelm interrupted, "this oddest, this most solitary of pursuits?" "For the very reason that it is reclusive," Jarno exclaimed. "I wanted to avoid people. There is nothing to be done for them, and they keep us from doing anything for ourselves. If they are happy, you are supposed to let them alone in their silliness; if they are unhappy, you are supposed to save them without interfering with that silliness; and no one ever asks whether *you* are happy or unhappy."

"It is not really all that bad," replied Wilhelm with a smile. "I do not wish to deny you your happiness," Jarno said. "Continue on your way, you second Diogenes. Do not let your lantern go out in broad daylight! Down there a new world lies before you; but I'll wager it is just like the old one behind us. If you cannot pander and pay your

debts, you are of no use to them." "They still seem more entertaining to me," replied Wilhelm, "than your lifeless cliffs." "Not at all," replied Jarno, "for these at least are not to be comprehended." "You are looking for an excuse," replied Wilhelm; "it is not like you to occupy yourself with things no one can hope to comprehend. Be honest and tell me what you have found in this cold and lifeless pastime!" "That is difficult to say for any pastime, especially for this one." Then he thought for a moment and said, "The letters of the alphabet are fine things, but they are inadequate to express sounds; we cannot do without sounds, and yet they are by no means sufficient to express actual meaning; in the end, we cling to letters and sounds, and we are no better off than if we did without them altogether. Everything we communicate, everything that is transmitted to us, is always only the obvious, not worth the effort at all."

"You are evading the question," Wilhelm said, "for after all, what does this have to do with these cliffs and peaks?" "But suppose I treated these very fissures and crevasses as letters, attempted to decipher them, shaped them into words, and learned to read them, would you have any objection to that?" "No, but it seems to me a rather diffuse alphabet." "More coherent than you think; but you must learn it, like any other. Nature has only one script, and I do not need to load myself down with all sorts of scribblings. Here I have no fear, as can happen if I work long and lovingly on some parchment, that some clever critic will come along and assure me that I have merely read my own meaning into it." With a smile his friend replied, "And yet even here someone may question your reading." "For that very reason I discuss it with no one," he answered, "and precisely because I am fond of you, I prefer not to continue this empty and false exchange of words."

Chapter Four

The two friends had descended, not without care and effort, to rejoin the children, who were resting below in a shady spot. The rock samples they had collected were unpacked by Montan and Felix almost more eagerly than the provisions. The latter had many questions, the former many names to provide. Felix was delighted that Montan knew all the names, and he quickly committed them to memory. Finally he brought out one more and asked, "And what is this one called?" Montan looked at him in wonder and said, "Where did you get that?" Fitz replied quickly, "I found it, it comes from here." "It does not come from this region," answered Montan. Fitz was delighted to see this superior man in doubt. "You shall have a ducat," said Montan, "if you can take me

to where it outcrops." "That will be easy to earn," Fitz replied, "but not right away." "Well, then, tell me the exact place, so that I can be sure of finding it. But that is impossible, because it is a cross-stone from Santiago de Compostela, which some foreigner lost, if indeed you did not filch it from him because it looks so remarkable." "Hand over your ducat to your traveling companion for safekeeping," said Fitz, "and I will confess truthfully where I got the rock. In the ruins of the church at St. Joseph is an altar, also in ruins. Beneath the stones on top, which have all split apart, I discovered a layer of this stone, which served as a base for the other, and I broke off as much as I could. If all the upper stones were moved out of the way, there would certainly be much more."

"Take your gold coin," Montan replied. "You deserve it for this discovery. It is certainly a nice one. We are pleased, and with reason, when inanimate Nature produces a likeness of that which we love and revere. She appears to us in the form of a sibyl, who testifies in advance to what has been determined in all eternity and will come to be only in the passing of time. On this rock, as on a miraculous, sacred base, the priests had founded their altar."

Wilhelm, who had listened for a while and had noticed that certain names, certain terms recurred, repeated his earlier wish that Montan might impart to him such knowledge as he would need for the initial instruction of the boy. "Give it up," Montan replied. "There is nothing worse than a teacher who knows no more than what his pupils should know. One who would instruct others may often withhold the best of his knowledge, but he must not have only partial knowledge." "But where are such perfect teachers to be found?" "You can find them easily," Montan replied. "But where?" asked Wilhelm with some disbelief. "Where the subject that you wish to study has its home," Montan replied. "You obtain your best instruction from complete immersion. Do you not learn foreign languages best in their own countries? where only the one language and no other reaches your ear?" "And so you arrived at your knowledge of the mountains here in the mountains?" Wilhelm enquired. "That is obvious." "Without dealing with human beings?" "At least only with such human beings," Montan replied, "as had absorbed the spirit of the mountains. Where pygmies, drawn by veins of metal, burrow through the rock, make the inside of the earth accessible and use all means to solve the most difficult tasks, that is where the thinking man, thirsty for knowledge, should take his place. He sees actions, deeds, does not interfere, and enjoys the successes and the failures. What is useful is only part of what is significant. To possess something wholly, to master it, you must study it for its own sake. But while I speak of lofty and ultimate questions, to which one ascends only late in life, after developing a rich variety of insights, I

see the boys there before us; for them it is completely different. The child wants to try everything, because any thing done well looks easy. 'The first step is always the hardest!' That may be true in some sense, but in general one can say: the first step is always the easiest, and it is the last steps that are achieved least often and with the greatest difficulty."

Wilhelm, who had been thinking, asked Montan, "Can you really have embraced the conviction that all activities should be approached separately, both in practice and in instruction?" "That seems to me the best and only way," Montan responded. "Anything a person is to accomplish must emanate from him like a second self, and how would that be possible if his first self were not completely permeated by it?" "But a liberal education has generally been considered advantageous and necessary." "That it may certainly be, at the proper time," Montan replied. "Liberality merely establishes the context within which the specialist can work effectively, since only that gives him adequate space. Yes, the day for specialization is come; fortunate is he who comprehends this and labors in this spirit for himself and others. In certain areas it is completely and immediately apparent. Practice to become a good violinist, and you may be sure that the conductor will be delighted to assign you a place in his orchestra. Make a receptive organ of yourself, and wait to see what position humanity will benevolently grant you in the overall scheme of things. Let us end here! He who does not believe it may go his own way, and may even succeed occasionally. But I say: to start serving at the bottom is necessary everywhere. To restrict oneself to a craft is the best thing. For the lesser mind it will always be a craft, for the better one an art, and for the best, if he does *one* he does all, or, to be less paradoxical, in the one thing he does properly, he sees the likeness of all that is done properly."

This conversation, of which we have conveyed only the outlines, went on until sunset, which, glorious though it was, made the company give thought to where they might pass the night. "I would not know of any shelter," Fitz said, "but if you are willing to spend the night with a kindly old charcoal burner, sitting or lying in a warm place, you are welcome." And so they all followed him along strange pathways to the quiet spot where each was soon to feel at home.

In the middle of a modest clearing stood the neatly rounded charcoal kiln, smoking and exuding warmth, and to one side a hut of pine boughs, with a bright little fire before it. Our friends sat down and made themselves comfortable. The children at once gravitated to the charcoal burner's wife, who hospitably set about dipping slices of toasted bread in butter, letting the tasty fat soak into the bread, to make delectable snacks for the ravenous travelers.

After this the boys played hide-and-seek among the dimly lit trunks of the fir trees, howling like wolves, barking like dogs, so that even a stouthearted wanderer might well have been alarmed. Meanwhile the friends conferred quietly about their circumstances. Among the curious obligations of the renunciants was the following: that if they encountered one another they should speak neither of the past nor the future, but only of the present.

Jarno, whose mind was filled with mining projects and the requisite knowledge and skills, passionately delivered the most precise and complete account of what gains he expected in both worlds, the old and the new, from such insights and technical skills; his friend, however, who had always sought his true treasures in the human heart alone, could scarcely form an idea of all this; finally he responded with a smile, "But you are contradicting yourself by starting only now, in your later years, to do what one should be trained up to from one's youth." "By no means," Jarno responded, "for I was raised as a child by a loving uncle, a high mining official, and I grew up among the pit boys, sailing little bark ships with them on the drainage ditch; that is what has brought me back to this world, where I now feel comfortable and rejuvenated. This charcoal smoke can hardly appeal to you as it does to me, who have drunk it in eagerly like incense since childhood. I have tried many things in the world, and always reached the same conclusion: comfort depends solely on custom; even disagreeable things to which we have become accustomed are dear to us. Once I suffered for a long time with a wound that would not heal, and when I finally recovered, it seemed very disagreeable that the doctor did not come by to change the dressing and have breakfast with me."

"But I should like to provide my son a freer view of the world than a narrow craft can give," replied Wilhelm. "Confine a man as you wish; the time will still come when he will gaze about him in his epoch; and how can he comprehend it if he does not know at least something of what has gone before? And would he not enter every spice shop with astonishment if he had no concept of the countries from which these indispensable rarities have made their way to him?"

"Why all the fuss?" Jarno replied. "Let him read the newspapers like any philistine and drink coffee like any old woman. But if you cannot let it be, and have set your heart upon a comprehensive education, I cannot understand how you can be so blind, how you can keep searching, how you fail to see that you are very close to a most excellent educational institution." "Very close?" Wilhelm asked, and shook his head. "Certainly!" the other replied; "what do you see here?" "Where do you mean?" "Right here in front of your nose." Jabbing with his forefinger, Jarno pointed and exclaimed impatiently, "What is that then?" "Oh, that," Wilhelm answered, "a charcoal kiln; but

what does that have to do with it?" "Good! Finally! A charcoal kiln! And how does one go about building one?" "One piles split logs against and on top of one another." "And when you have done that, what comes next?" "It seems to me," said Wilhelm, "that in Socratic fashion you wish to do me the honor of making me comprehend, of making me admit, that I am thoroughly absurd and thickheaded."

"By no means!" Jarno replied. "Continue, my friend, to reply to each point. All right: what happens when everything has been piled neatly, with the logs close together, yet with air spaces in between?" "Well, then you light it." "And when it has all caught fire, when flames are licking out of every crack, what do you do? Do you let it keep burning?" "No indeed! You quickly cover the licking flames with turf and earth, with coal dust and whatever you have at hand." "To put it out?" "No indeed! To damp it down." "And so you leave it as much air as it needs to heat evenly, so that everything is completely charred. Then you seal up every crack, prevent any outbreak, so that gradually everything will go out, char, cool, and finally be dismantled and delivered as a saleable ware to smiths and locksmiths, to bakers and cooks, and when it has served sufficiently for the benefit of our beloved Christendom, the ash is used up by washerwomen and soapmakers."

"Well," Wilhelm replied, laughing, "with reference to this parable, how do you see yourself?" "That is not hard to say," Jarno responded. "I consider myself an old coal basket full of stout beech charcoal, but I allow myself the singularity of burning only for myself, for which reason I strike others as very peculiar." "And how about me?" Wilhelm returned, "How will you deal with me?" "At the moment," Jarno said, "I see you as a wanderer's staff, which has the remarkable quality of sprouting leaves in whatever corner one sets it, but of nowhere striking roots. Now extend the parable for yourself, and you will understand why neither forester nor gardener, neither charcoal burner nor cabinetmaker, nor any craftsman, can do anything with you."

During this discussion, Wilhelm drew from his bosom, for what purpose I know not, something that looked half like a wallet, half like a set of instruments; Montan spoke of it as something familiar from long ago. Our friend did not deny that he carried it with him as a sort of fetish, in the superstition that his fate depended to some degree on its possession.

But what it was, we may not confide to the reader at this juncture. We must say only this: it gave rise to a discussion that finally concluded with Wilhelm's admitting that he had long been inclined to devote himself to a certain special occupation, a truly useful art, provided that Montan would intercede with the league to revoke that most burdensome of rules, the prohibition on spending more than three days in one place, and to permit him to remain, here or there, as he

wished, so as to attain his goal. Montan promised to see this done, after Wilhelm had solemnly sworn to pursue unceasingly the purpose that he had confided to him and to adhere most faithfully to his resolution.

Discussing all this earnestly, and replying to one another without interruption, they had left their refuge of the night, where little by little a strange, sinister company had gathered, and at daybreak they emerged from the woods into a clearing, where they found a few deer, which particularly delighted the responsive Felix. They prepared to part, for here the paths pointed in different ways. They asked Fitz about the various directions, but he seemed distracted and gave uncharacteristically confused replies. "You are a little scoundrel," Jarno remarked. "You knew all of those men who came and sat down around us during the night. There were woodsmen and miners; that was all right, but I think the others were smugglers, poachers, and the tall one, the very last one, who kept scratching marks in the sand and whom the others treated with some respect, was certainly a treasure hunter with whom you are in league."

"They are all good folk," Fitz retorted, "their means are scant, and if they sometimes do things that others forbid, it is because they are poor devils who have to take liberties just to stay alive."

But in fact the little scamp was pensive, because he had noticed the friends' preparations for parting. He was silently deliberating, for he was in doubt as to which of the two parties he should follow. He calculated the advantages: the father and son were careless with silver, but Jarno with gold; he decided it was best not to let go of him. Therefore he promptly seized a proffered opportunity, and when in parting Jarno said to him, "Now, when I come to St. Joseph, I shall see whether you are honest; I will look for the cross-stone and the ruins of the altar." "You will find nothing," Fitz replied, "and I will still be honest; the stone comes from there, but I took all the pieces away and have hidden them up here. It is precious stone, and without it no one can raise any treasure; they pay me very well for a small piece. You were perfectly right; that is how I was acquainted with that lean man."

Now there were new negotiations. Fitz pledged to provide Jarno, in return for another ducat, with a hefty piece of this rare material, to be had at a moderate distance from there, while at the same time he advised against venturing to the Castle of the Giants. But because Felix nevertheless insisted, Fitz impressed upon the guide not to allow the travelers too far inside, for no one had ever found his way out of those caves and crevices again. They parted, and Fitz promised to arrive in good time in the halls of the Castle of the Giants.

The guide strode on ahead, the two others followed; but the man had gone only a short stretch up the mountain when Felix noticed that they were not taking the path that Fitz had indicated. The guide replied, however, "I should know what I am about! Just a few days ago a violent storm knocked down this next section of the forest; trees are lying every which way, blocking the path. Follow me: I will bring you there safely." Felix enlivened the arduous path for himself by gambling along and leaping from boulder to boulder, taking pleasure in his newfound knowledge that he was jumping from granite to granite.

Up he went, until finally he paused, balancing on toppled black columns, and suddenly saw before him the Castle of the Giants. Walls and columns towered up on a solitary peak; continuous palisades formed portal after portal, corridor after corridor. The guide issued a stern warning not to wander too far inside, and, noticing ashes left by his predecessors on a sunny spot that commanded an extensive view, he soon had a crackling fire going. While he prepared a frugal meal, as he was accustomed to do in such locations, and while Wilhelm studied the magnificent view of the region through which he intended to journey, Felix vanished; he must have strayed into the cavern. He did not answer their whistles and shouts, and did not reappear.

Wilhelm, however, was prepared, as is fitting for a pilgrim, for many eventualities, and now took from his hunting pouch a ball of string, attached it firmly, and entrusted himself to the guiding sign by which he had intended to lead his son inside. He moved forward, blowing his whistle from time to time, but long in vain. Finally a piercing whistle sounded from the depths, and soon after that Felix's head popped up from a fissure in the black rock. "Are you alone?" the boy whispered suspiciously. "All alone!" the father replied. "Hand me some wood! Hand me heavy sticks!" the boy exclaimed, took them, and disappeared, after calling anxiously, "Let no one into the cave!" But after a while he popped up again, asking for longer and stronger sticks. The father waited eagerly for the answer to this riddle. Finally the bold child climbed nimbly out of the crevice, carrying a small casket, no larger than a small octavo volume, old and splendid in appearance. It seemed to be of gold ornamented with enamel. "Hide it, and do not let anyone see it!" Then he described hastily how, in response to a mysterious inner urging, he had crawled into that crevice and had found below a dimly illuminated room. In it stood, as he said, a large iron chest; it was not locked, to be sure, but the top was too heavy to lift, almost too heavy to open even a crack. To master it, he had asked for the sticks, using some as props under the lid, forcing some in as wedges; finally he had found, though the chest was empty, the splendid little book in a corner of it. They promised each other to keep this a deep secret.

Noon was past, they had eaten, but still Fitz had not come as he had promised. Felix, however, was especially restless, longing to leave this place where his treasure seemed exposed to terrestrial or subterrestrial demands that it be returned. The columns seemed to him darker, the caverns deeper. A secret weighed on him, a possession—rightful or wrongful? safe or unsafe? Impatience drove him from the spot; he thought he would be free of care if he changed location.

They took the way toward the large estates of that great landowner of whose wealth and eccentricities they had heard so much. Felix no longer bounded along as he had that morning, and all three proceeded in silence for hours. Several times he wanted to look at the casket, but his father, indicating the guide, bade him be still. At one moment he longed to see Fitz. Then he dreaded the rogue again. First he whistled to give him a sign, then he regretted having done it, and thus he continued to waver, until finally Fitz sounded his little whistle in the distance. He excused his absence from the Castle of the Giants; he had lost time with Jarno, he said, and the fallen trees had held him back. Then he inquired in detail how they had fared among the columns and caverns, how far inside they had penetrated. Felix told him one tale after the other, half cocky, half ill at ease. He smiled at his father, plucked at him furtively, and did everything possible to let on that he had a secret and was hiding something.

They had finally reached a wagon road which was to lead them easily to the estate, but Fitz claimed to know a shorter and better way; the guide refused to accompany them, and continued along the straight, broad road on which they had started. The two wanderers trusted the roguish lad, and believed they had done well, for the path led steeply down the mountain, through a forest of very tall, slender larches, which, thinning out, finally allowed them to see the most beautiful estate imaginable, in brilliant sunlight.

It was a great plantation, dedicated, it appeared, entirely to productive use. Despite the profusion of fruit trees, it lay spread out clearly before their eyes, for it was laid out in symmetrical segments over a generally sloping area, which, however, was varied with rises and depressions. There were several dwellings scattered in such a fashion that the place seemed to belong to several owners, although, as Fitz assured them, it was governed and used by a single lord. Beyond the plantation they could see an immense landscape, amply cultivated and planted. They could clearly distinguish lakes and rivers.

They had come ever nearer down the mountainside, and expected to enter the grounds any minute now, when Wilhelm stopped short and Fitz made no effort to hide his malicious glee: a sudden chasm at the foot of the mountain opened before them, revealing a hitherto invisible high wall on the other side. From the outside it looked for-

bidding enough, although on the inside the ground was level with its top. A deep moat thus separated them from the plantation, into which they could look directly. "We have to go a fairly long way around," Fitz said, "if we want to reach the road that leads in. But I know an entrance from this side which is a good bit closer. The tunnels through which the water pouring off the mountains during rain storms is diverted into the gardens start near here; they are high enough and wide enough that it is possible to get through them fairly comfortably." When Felix heard tunnels mentioned, he was burning to try this entrance. Wilhelm followed the children, and together they climbed down the thoroughly dry, steep steps of the aqueduct. They found themselves alternately in light or in darkness, depending on whether light streamed in through the openings or was blocked by columns or walls. At length they reached a somewhat level stretch, and were advancing slowly when suddenly a shot rang out quite near them, two concealed iron gratings closed simultaneously, and they were trapped from both sides. Not the entire party, to be sure: only Wilhelm and Felix were caught. For Fitz, as soon as the shot sounded, had jumped back, and the grating had caught only his wide sleeve as it clanged shut; but he, quickly slipping out of his jacket, had fled, without a moment's delay.

The two prisoners barely had time to recover from their astonishment when they heard human voices that seemed to be approaching slowly. Presently armed men bearing torches approached the gratings, looking curiously to see what sort of catch they had made. They at once asked whether the two were willing to surrender peaceably. "There can be no talk of surrender here," Wilhelm replied; "we are in your power. We should rather ask whether you are willing to spare us. I shall hand over to you the only weapon we have with us," and with these words he passed his flintlock through the bars. The grating opened promptly, and the new arrivals were led calmly onward, and when they had been conducted up a spiral staircase, they found themselves in a peculiar place; it was a clean, spacious room, lit by small windows just below the ceiling; despite the heavy iron bars, they admitted ample light. Chairs, bedsteads, and whatever else one might need in a modest lodging were provided, and anyone finding himself here would seem to lack for nothing but freedom.

Upon entering Wilhelm had at once sat down to consider the circumstances; Felix, however, once recovered from his initial astonishment, fell into a terrible rage. These steep walls, these high windows, these strong doors, this isolation, this confinement, were completely new to him. He looked around, he ran back and forth, stamped his feet, wept, rattled at the doors, beat upon them with his fists, and was even about to run at them with lowered head if Wilhelm had not seized him and held him fast.

"Just look at all this calmly, my son," the father began; "impatience and violence will not help us out of this situation. The mystery will be cleared up, but I am sorely mistaken if we have not fallen into good hands. Look at these inscriptions: 'For the Innocent, Freedom and Reparation; for the Misguided, Compassion; for the Guilty, Justice with Mercy.' All this shows that these arrangements are the work of necessity, not of cruelty. Man has all too much reason to protect himself against man. There are many of ill will, not few of ill deeds, and to live as one ought, it is not always enough to practice kindness."

Felix had pulled himself together, but at once threw himself down on one of the cots, without further utterance or response. His father did not desist, but continued, "Let this experience, which you have made while you are still young and innocent, stand as vivid testimony to you of the century into which you have been born, and of how perfect it is. What a road did not mankind have to travel before it reached the stage at which it could treat the guilty with gentleness, the criminal with tolerance, the inhumane with humanity! Surely they were men of divine nature who first preached such tolerance, who dedicated their lives to making its practice possible and to hastening its acceptance. Humans are seldom capable of the beautiful, more often of the good; and in what high respect must we not hold those who seek to further it at great sacrifice."

These comforting and instructive words, which precisely expressed the intended meaning of these surroundings, had gone unheard by Felix; for he lay in deepest slumber, more beautiful and fresher than ever, for a passion to which he was seldom prone had brought his innermost emotions to his smooth cheeks. His father stood gazing on him with pleasure, when a handsome young man entered. After regarding the new arrival amiably for a while, he began to question him about the circumstances that had led him on his unusual route and into this trap. Wilhelm recounted the incident simply, handed him a few papers that served to establish his identity, and cited as witness the guide, who would soon be arriving from another direction, by the proper route. When matters had been clarified to this extent, the official besought his guest to follow him. Since Felix could not be awakened, the attendants bore him on the sturdy mattress out into the fresh air, like the unconscious Ulysses in his time.

Wilhelm followed the official to a lovely garden pavilion, where refreshments were laid out for him to enjoy, while the official went to report to his superiors. When Felix awoke and noticed the table laid with fruit, wine, and pastry, and also the cheering sight of the open door, he was overcome with a curious sensation. He runs outside, he comes back, he thinks he must have been dreaming; and soon, with the excellent fare and the pleasant surroundings, he had forgotten his

previous terror and distress, as one forgets a bad dream in the bright light of morning.

The guide had arrived; the official returned with him and another, elderly, even friendlier man, and the matter was explained as follows: the owner of this estate, a benefactor in the noble sense that he inspired all those around him to be active and creative, had for some years now given away saplings from his extensive nurseries, free to industrious growers, for a certain price to neglectful ones, and likewise to those who wished to market them, though at a modest price. But the two latter groups also demanded to receive gratis that which the worthy growers received gratis, and when their demand was not met, they tried to steal the saplings. By a number of means they had succeeded. This vexed the owner all the more because the nurseries were not only plundered but also ruined by their careless haste. There were indications that they had entered by way of the water conduit, and therefore the trap with the iron grating had been installed, with an automatic shot intended only as a signal. The little boy had appeared in the gardens several times under various pretexts, and nothing was more natural than that his audacity and roguery should have caused him to lead the strangers by a path that he had earlier scouted for another purpose. They had hoped to capture him; in the meantime, his little jacket was being saved along with other pieces of evidence.

Chapter Five

On the way to the manor house, our friend, to his amazement, found nothing resembling an older pleasure garden or a modern park; fruit trees planted in straight rows, fields of vegetables, large beds of medicinal herbs, and anything that might be useful in any way—all this he could observe with one glance over the gently sloping land. A courtyard shaded by tall lindens formed the dignified entry to the imposing structure, and a long avenue leading from it, with trees of similar size and dignity, provided at any hour of the day an opportunity to stroll and enjoy the open air. Entering the manor house he found the walls of the vestibule adorned in a singular manner: large geographical representations of the four corners of the earth caught his eye; the stately walls of the stairwell were likewise decorated with maps of individual kingdoms, and, once admitted to the great hall, he found himself surrounded by views of the most notable cities, framed above and below by depictions of the landscapes in which they are situated, all of this done with great artistry, such that details were clearly visible, and yet an unbroken continuity remained evident.

The master of the house, a small, vivacious man well along in years, welcomed the guest and asked without further ceremony, indicating the walls, whether perhaps one of these cities might be familiar to him, and whether he had ever passed time there. Our friend was able to render a satisfactory account of a number of matters and prove that he had not only seen many cities but had also carefully noted their circumstances and special characteristics.

The host rang and ordered that the two new arrivals be assigned a room and later shown down to supper; this was done. In a large hall on the ground floor two ladies greeted Wilhelm. One addressed him with great cheerfulness: "You will find little company here, but it will be good. I, the younger niece, am called Hersilie, and this, my older sister, is named Juliette. The two gentlemen are father and son, stewards, whom you have met, friends of the family who receive all confidence, as they deserve. Let us be seated!" The two ladies placed Wilhelm between them, the stewards sat at both ends, with Felix on the other side of the table, where he immediately moved to the seat opposite Hersilie and did not take his eyes off her.

After some preliminary pleasantries, Hersilie took occasion to say, "That the stranger may become acquainted with us more quickly and be initiated into our circle, I must confess that we read a good deal here, and that through chance, individual taste, and probably also a spirit of contradiction, each of us has chosen a different literature. Our uncle likes Italian, the lady here does not object to being taken for the perfect Englishwoman, I myself prefer the French, so long as they are lighthearted and graceful. And Papa steward here enjoys the older German literature, while his son, as is fitting, turns his attention to the newer, more recent writings. According to this arrangement you shall judge us, shall join in, agree, or take issue with us; in every sense you will be welcome." And in this spirit the conversation grew more lively.

Meanwhile the direction of the handsome Felix's fervent glances had by no means escaped Hersilie; she felt surprised and flattered, and sent him the tastiest morsels, which he received with joy and gratitude. But now, during the dessert, as he gazed at her across a bowl of apples, the luscious fruit seemed to her like so many rivals. No sooner thought than done: she seized an apple and passed it across the table to the budding adventurer. He, hastily seizing it, at once began to peel it; but, keeping his eyes fixed upon his charming neighbor, he cut deeply into his own thumb. Blood spurted out; Hersilie leapt up and attended to him. When she had stopped the bleeding, she bound the wound with sticking plaster from her kit. Meanwhile the boy had thrown his arms around her and would not let her go. The disturbance spread to

the rest of the company; they all rose from the table and prepared to take leave of one another.

"You also read before you go to sleep, do you not?" Hersilie asked Wilhelm; "I shall send you a manuscript, a translation from the French that I did myself, and you must tell me if you have ever encountered anything more charming. A mad girl appears in it! That may not sound like a great recommendation, but if I should ever go mad, as I am sometimes tempted to do, it would be in this fashion."

The Deranged Pilgrim

Monsieur de Revanne, a wealthy gentleman of private means, owns the finest estates in his province. Together with his son and his sister, he occupies a chateau that would be worthy of a prince; and indeed, inasmuch as his park, his water, his tenantries, his manufactures, and his household nourish half the inhabitants for six miles around, by virtue of his good name and the benefits he confers, he is truly a prince.

Some years ago he was strolling on the highway along the wall surrounding his park, and he took a notion to rest in a pleasant grove where travelers like to stop. Tall trees tower above young, dense underbrush; one is protected from wind and sun; a neatly lined spring sends its water over roots, stones, and grass. As was his wont, the gentleman had a book and his flintlock with him. Now he tried to read, agreeably distracted, often by the singing of the birds, sometimes by other walkers' footsteps.

A lovely morning was passing thus when a woman, young and charming, approached him. She left the road, seeming to expect peace and refreshment from the cool spot where he sat. His book fell from his hands, so surprised was he. The pilgrim, with the loveliest eyes in the world and a face pleasantly flushed from the exercise, was so distinguished in figure, gait, and comportment that he involuntarily rose from his place and looked toward the road, expecting to see her entourage following. The figure further caught his attention by bowing to him with a noble air, and he greeted her respectfully in return. The lovely traveler seated herself by the rim of the spring, without saying a word, merely sighing deeply.

"The curious workings of sympathy!" exclaimed M. de Revanne as he recounted the incident to me. "In the silence, I echoed this sigh. I stood there, not knowing what to do or to say. My eyes were unable to take in all her perfections. Lying there, resting on one elbow, was the loveliest figure of a woman one could imagine! Her shoes gave me cause for reflection; covered with dust, they indicated a long journey on foot, and yet her silk stockings were as neat as if they had just come

out from beneath the iron. Her gathered-up dress had no wrinkles, her hair seemed to have been freshly curled that very morning; fine linen, fine lace; she was dressed as if she were going to a ball. Nothing about her suggested the vagabond, and yet she was one; but one worthy of pity, one worthy of honor.

"At last I took advantage of a few glances she cast at me to inquire whether she were traveling alone. 'Yes, Sir,' she replied, 'I am alone in the world.' 'How is that, Madame? Can it be that you have no parents, no acquaintances?' 'No, that I did not wish to say, Sir. Parents I have, and acquaintances aplenty; but no friends.' 'For that,' I continued, 'you cannot possibly be to blame. You have a figure and surely a heart as well to which much may be forgiven.'

"She perceived the gentle reproach my compliment concealed, and I formed a favorable impression of her breeding. She looked at me with two heavenly eyes of the deepest, purest blue, transparent and shining; and she responded in a noble tone: that she could not take it amiss when a man of honor, such as I appeared to be, harbored certain suspicions toward a young woman he found traveling alone on the road. She had encountered similar suspicions several times before. But although she might be strange, although no one had a right to question her, she begged me to believe that the purpose of her journey was consistent with the most exacting virtue. Reasons for which she was obliged to account to no one compelled her to carry her sorrows about with her in the world. She had discovered that the perils generally feared for one of her sex were imaginary and that a woman's virtue was endangered, even among highwaymen, only when her heart and principles faltered.

"Besides, she ventured forth only at those times and on those roads which she thought safe; she did not speak with just anyone she chanced to meet, and at times she would stay at suitable places where she might earn her keep by performing services of the sort to which she had been bred. Here her voice sank, her eyelids drooped, and I saw a few tears run down her cheeks.

"I replied that I in no wise doubted the quality of her origins, any more than I doubted her virtue. I regretted only that some necessity compelled her to serve when she seemed so worthy of being served. I did not wish to press her further, I continued, despite my lively curiosity, but rather hoped to convince myself through nearer acquaintance with her that she was as concerned for her reputation as for her virtue. These words seemed to wound her again, for she replied that she concealed her name and native land precisely for the sake of her reputation, which, however, in the end usually involves less reality than speculation. When she offered her services, she showed references from the households where she had most recently made herself useful, and

she did not disguise her wish not to be questioned about her native land and her family. People decided accordingly, trusting to Heaven or her own word for the blamelessness of her entire life and for her honesty."

Statements of this sort aroused no suspicion that the lovely adventurer might be suffering from mental confusion. M. de Revanne, who could not well comprehend such a decision to run off into the world, now surmised that she was perhaps to have been married against her will. It then occurred to him that it might even be unrequited love, and strangely enough, but as is often the case, from thinking she loved another, he fell in love himself and feared that she might continue her journey. He could not turn his eyes from the beauty of her face, which was enhanced by the greenish half-light of the grove. Never, if nymphs had ever existed, had a more beautiful one appeared stretched out upon the grass, and the rather romantic quality of this encounter exerted a charm that he was incapable of resisting.

Without more careful consideration of the matter, therefore, M. de Revanne persuaded the lovely stranger to let him lead her to his chateau. She raises no objection, she goes along and proves herself well acquainted with the genteel world. Refreshments are served, and she accepts them without false courtesy but with gracious expressions of gratitude. In the time before luncheon, she is shown around the house. She comments only upon things that deserve to be singled out, whether furniture, paintings, or the ingenious arrangement of the rooms. She comes upon a library, recognizes the good books, and speaks of them with taste and modesty. No idle chatter, no awkwardness. At table an equally noble and natural bearing and a most charming tone in conversation. Thus far everything she says is sensible, and her character appears to be as charming as her person.

After luncheon a little obstinate trait made her even lovelier; turning to Mlle de Revanne with a smile, she says: it is her custom to pay for her midday meal with some bit of work. Whenever she lacks for money, she asks the hostess for sewing needles. "Permit me," she added, "to leave a flower in one of your embroidery frames, so that at the sight of it you may remember this poor stranger."

Mlle de Revanne replied that she was most sorry to have no canvas prepared and would therefore have to forego the pleasure of observing her skill. At once the pilgrim turned her eyes toward the piano. "In that case," said she, "I shall pay my debt with wind coin, as was the custom among strolling minstrels." She tried out the instrument with two or three preludes that bespoke a practiced hand. They doubted no longer that she was a young woman of high station, endowed with all the most winning accomplishments. At first her playing was lively and brilliant. Then she moved to more serious tones, to tones of profound

sorrow that could also be read in her eyes. They filled with tears, her face was transformed, her fingers ceased to move; but suddenly she surprised everyone with a mischievous song, which she performed in a merry and droll manner, with the loveliest voice imaginable. Since later events gave reason to believe that this burlesque romance had some closer connection with her own story, I may be forgiven for including it here:

Who comes in haste, his cloak awry,
When scarce the east is growing gray?
Perhaps our friend, 'neath windy sky
As pilgrim comes abroad today?
Who can have torn away his hood?
Does he by choice thus barefoot go?
How came he to this somber wood,
To barren heights adrift with snow?

Lost hopes of joy—a bitter joke—
Now driven from his cozy spot
And had he also lost his cloak,
What great disgrace would be his lot!
Thus did that naughty scamp betray
The lad, and took his clothes away.
Our friend set out upon his road
Like Father Adam all unclothed.

But why went he upon that road
To seek the apple full of woe,
Which in the miller's garden glowed,
As once in Paradise it shone!
He'll not repeat this venture soon.
He scampered quickly from the house,
And now beneath the waning moon
In bitterest lament breaks out:

“In her deep glances' burning light
No word of treachery could I read.
Our love seemed nothing but delight,
Yet she was plotting this cruel deed!
How could I, locked in her embrace,
Divine the treason in her breast?
She bade swift Cupid slow his pace;
He did his part to make us blest.

To take her pleasure in my ardor

All through that long and lovely night,
And not to call or rouse her mother
Before she saw the dawn's first light!
In swarmed all her kith and kin,
A veritable stream, a tide!
Brothers, cousins, aunts pressed in,
All clamoring that she be my bride.

What raging, what appalling clamor!
Each seemed a different beast to be,
Insisting I return the flower,
With horrid shouts assaulting me:
'But why attack with insane pleasure
Thus cruelly this guiltless youth!
To be the first to rob such treasure
I was not quick enough in truth.

Swift Cupid knows no other will
But his own joy at working woe:
He'd not let flowers at the mill
Full sixteen summers untouched grow.'
They snatched my clothing from my side,
And would have had the mantle too.
How could so small a house thus hide
So many men, so cursed a crew!

Then up I leapt, and raged and swore,
Intent my way past all to dare,
Gazed at the wicked girl once more,
And she, alas, was still so fair.
They all gave way before my anger,
Though many a shout still filled the air;
So raging with a voice of thunder
At last I fled the evil lair.

As ladies of the town we flee,
We'll shun you maidens of the village!
Leave it to ladies of quality,
Their humble servingmen to pillage!
But if you're one of those 'of skill,'
And tender duties you'd evade,
So change your lovers, if you will,
But never let them be betrayed."

Thus sings he in the winter night,
No blade of grass upon the mead,
I laugh to see his sorry plight,
For it was well-deserved indeed;
And may this be the fate of all
Who treat by day their true loves ill,
And with foolhardy boldness crawl
By night to Cupid's faithless mill.

It was undoubtedly worrisome that she could forget herself in such a fashion, and this episode might serve as an indication of a mind not always equally composed. "But," M. de Revanne told me, "we, too, forgot all the observations we might have made, I do not know exactly how. We must have been captivated by the inexpressible grace with which she performed these antics. She played in a teasing manner, yet with feeling. Her fingers obeyed her perfectly, and her voice was truly enchanting. When she had finished, she appeared as self-possessed as before, and we thought she had intended simply to enliven the time for digestion.

"Soon afterwards she requested permission to continue on her way, but at a sign from me, my sister said: if she were in no hurry and our hospitality were not displeasing to her, it would indeed be delightful for us to have her several days with us. I intended to offer her some occupation, since she agreed to stay. But on this first day and on those that followed we merely showed her around. She never once belied herself; she was the soul of reason, endowed with every grace. Her spirit was refined and acute, her memory well stocked, and her disposition so lovely that she often aroused our admiration and held our attention completely. At the same time she knew the rules of good conduct and practiced them toward every one of us, and no less toward several friends who came to call. So perfectly did she comport herself that we could not think how to reconcile those peculiarities with such flawless breeding.

"I really no longer dared to suggest service in my household. My sister, who liked her, likewise considered it her duty to spare the delicate feelings of the stranger. Together they attended to household matters, and here the good child quite often lowered herself to menial tasks and yet could equally well handle anything which demanded organization and calculation.

"In a short time she established a degree of order in the house that we had not even realized we lacked. She was a most capable housekeeper, and since she had begun by sitting down to table with us, she did not now withdraw out of false modesty, but continued to dine with us without scruple. But she would not touch a playing card, a

musical instrument, until she had completed the tasks she had assumed.

"I must now confess that the fate of this girl had begun to touch me most deeply. I pitied the parents, who probably missed such a daughter a great deal; I sighed to think that such gentle virtues, so many qualities, should go to waste. She had already lived with us for several months, and I hoped that the trust we sought to inspire in her would at last bring her secret to her lips. If it was a misfortune, we could help. If it was a misstep, it was to be hoped that our mediation, our attestations, could procure forgiveness for a passing error on her part. But all our assurances of friendship, even our pleading, proved ineffective. Whenever she sensed our intention to obtain some clarification from her, she would take refuge behind general maxims in order to justify herself without revealing anything. For example, if we spoke of her misfortune, she remarked, 'Misfortune befalls both the good and the evil. It is a potent medicine, which attacks good fluids simultaneously with bad ones.'

"If we sought to discover the reason for her flight from her father's house, she would say with a smile, 'If the hind flees, that does not mean it is to blame.' If we inquired whether she had suffered persecution, 'It is the fate of many a girl of good birth to experience and endure persecution. She who weeps at an insult will encounter many such.' But how could she have decided to expose her life to the coarseness of the common throng, or at least to owe it sometimes to their mercy? At that she laughed again and responded, 'The poor man who greets the rich man at table does not lack for good sense.' Once, when the conversation became jocular, we spoke to her of lovers and asked her whether she were not acquainted with the frosty hero of her ballad. I still recall vividly how this question seemed to pierce her through and through. She looked at me wide-eyed, with a gaze so solemn and severe that my own eyes could not withstand it. And whenever love was mentioned thereafter, we could expect to see the grace of her being and the vivacity of her spirit dampened. She promptly fell into a reflectiveness that we took for brooding and was probably merely sorrow. Yet on the whole she remained cheerful, though without great vivacity, noble without pretension, upright without frankness, withdrawn without timidity, more long-suffering than meek, and more appreciative than warm in response to caresses and attentions. Certainly she was a lady bred to preside over a great household, and yet she seemed to be no older than twenty-one.

"Thus this young, inexplicable person, who had completely captivated me, continued to comport herself during the two years that it pleased her to tarry with us, until she concluded with a folly far stranger than her personal qualities were admirable and splendid. My son,

younger than I, will be able to console himself. As for me, I am afraid I shall be so weak as to miss her always."

Now I must describe an intelligent woman's folly, so as to show that folly is often nothing but reason under another aspect. To be sure, a strange contradiction will be seen between the pilgrim's noble character and the odd ruse that she employed. But the reader is already familiar with two of her peculiarities: the pilgrimage itself and her ballad.

It must be obvious that M. de Revanne was in love with the stranger. Now, he did not place much trust in his fifty-year-old face, notwithstanding that he looked as fresh and vigorous as a man of thirty. But perhaps he hoped to please her with his pure, youthful good health, with the goodness, serenity, gentleness, generosity of his character; perhaps also with his fortune, although he was tactful enough to realize that one cannot purchase that which has no price.

But his son, on the other hand, charming, tender, passionate, threw himself head over heels into the adventure, with no more thought than his father. First he sought cautiously to win the stranger, whom he had come to esteem chiefly because of his father's and his aunt's praise and friendship. He strove in earnest for a charming woman, who to his passion appeared elevated far above her present condition. Her severity inflamed him more than her merits and her beauty. He dared to speak, to venture, to promise.

His father, without intending to do so, always lent his own wooing a somewhat fatherly aspect. He knew himself, and once he had recognized his rival, did not hope to triumph over him without resorting to means unworthy of a man of principle. Nonetheless he continued on his course, although he could not but know that kindness and even a fortune constitute attractions to which a woman may succumb with premeditation, but which remain powerless the moment love manifests itself paired with youth and its charms. M. de Revanne committed other errors as well, which he later regretted. Where a noble friendship already existed, he spoke of a permanent, secret, legal union. He may also have complained and uttered the word ingratitude. Certainly he revealed that he did not know the lady he loved when he told her one day that many a benefactor received ill in return for good. The stranger replied simply, "Many benefactors would like to buy all the rights of their protégés for a mess of pottage."

The lovely stranger, caught between two rival suitors, guided by unknown motives, seems to have intended nothing but to spare herself and others foolish nonsense when, under these trying circumstances, she resorted to a very peculiar solution. The son was pressing her with the boldness characteristic of his age, threatening, as youths will, to sacrifice his life if she would show him no mercy. The father, somewhat less unreasonable, was, however, equally insistent; both of them utterly

serious. This charming creature could have secured for herself a situation she well deserved, for both of the de Revannes swear they intended to marry her.

But from the example of this girl let women learn that an upright soul, even if the mind has been confused by vanity or true madness, does not prolong the sufferings of those whom it does not wish to heal. The pilgrim felt herself in an extremity, in which it would not be easy to defend herself for long. She was in the power of two lovers who could excuse any impertinence on their own part by the purity of their intentions, since they had resolved to justify their temerity by a solemn union. Thus it was, and thus she perceived it.

She could barricade herself behind Mlle de Revanne, but she chose not to, doubtless out of delicacy, out of respect for her benefactress. She does not lose her composure, she conceives a plan to preserve everyone's virtue by letting her own appear questionable. She is mad out of faithfulness, which her lover certainly does not deserve if he fails to appreciate all her sacrifices, even if they should remain unknown to him.

One day, when M. de Revanne responded somewhat too vigorously to the friendship, the gratitude she evidenced toward him, she suddenly assumed a naive air that captured his attention. "Your kindness, Sir," she said, "alarms me, and let me reveal frankly to you why. I am fully sensible that I owe all my gratitude to you alone, and yet—" "Cruel maiden!" exclaimed M. de Revanne, "I understand you. My son has moved your heart." "Alas, dear Sir, that was not all! Only through my confusion can I express . . ." "What, Mademoiselle, could it be that you—" "I very much fear so," she said, with a deep curtsy, and shedding a tear. For women never lack a tear for their stratagems, never an excuse for their missteps.

However much in love M. de Revanne might be, he had to be amazed at this new style of innocent honesty wearing a mother's mob-cap, and he found her curtsy entirely fitting. "But Mademoiselle, I utterly fail to understand—" "I likewise," said she, and her tears flowed more copiously. They flowed so long that M. de Revanne, after some very morose reflection, with calm mien broke the silence and said, "This opens my eyes. I see now how absurd my demands were. I make you no reproach, and as the sole punishment for the pain you cause me, I promise you as much of his inheritance as is necessary to discover whether he loves you as much as I do." "Ah, dear Sir, take pity on my innocence and say nothing to him about it."

Demanding secrecy is not the way to secure it. After these steps the lovely stranger expected to see her lover before her indignant and enraged. Soon he appeared, with a look in his eye that presaged devastating words. Yet he stammered and could bring forth nothing but,

"What is this, Mademoiselle, is it possible?" "What do you mean, Sir?" she replied with a smile that in such a situation can drive a man to desperation. "What is this 'What do you mean?' Come along, Mademoiselle, you are a fine one! But at least one should not disinherit legitimate offspring. It is bad enough to accuse them. Yes, Mademoiselle, I see through your plot with my father. You both are giving me a son, and it is really my brother, of that I am certain!"

With the same calm, pleasant expression, the lovely but demented lady replied, "You are certain of nothing. It is neither your son nor your brother. Boys are naughty, I did not want one. It is a poor little girl whom I will take away, far, far away from people, evil, foolish, faithless people!"

And then with a deep sigh, "Farewell," she continued, "Farewell, dear Revanne! You have by nature an upright heart; hold fast to the principles of integrity. They are not dangerous when one has a well established fortune. Be kind to the poor. He who despises the plea of troubled innocence will one day plead himself and go unheard. He who has no compunction to despise the compunction of a defenseless maiden will fall prey to women without compunction. He who is not sensible of what an honorable maiden must feel when she is courted, does not deserve to receive her hand. He who defies all reason, all the intentions and plans of his family, to fashion projects to serve his passion deserves to be deprived of the fruits of his passion and to lose the respect of his family. I do believe you loved me honestly, but, my dear Revanne, the cat knows whose beard she licks. If ever you become the lover of a worthy woman, remember the mill of the faithless lover. Learn from my example to rely upon the loyalty and discretion of your beloved. You know whether I am unfaithful, and your father knows it, too. I thought to speed through the world and expose myself to all its perils. Certainly the greatest are those that threaten me in this house. But because you are young, I shall tell you alone, and in confidence: men and women are unfaithful only by choice. And that is what I wanted to prove to my friend from the mill, who will perhaps see me again when his heart is pure enough to understand what he has lost."

Young Revanne was still listening when she had finished speaking. He stood there as if struck by lightning. At length tears opened his eyes, and thus moved he ran to his aunt, his father, to tell them that Mademoiselle was leaving, Mademoiselle was an angel, or rather a demon, wandering about in the world to torture hearts. But the pilgrim had prepared everything so carefully that she was no longer to be found. And when father and son had revealed all to each other, there could no longer be any doubt as to her innocence, her talents, her madness. No matter what lengths M. de Revanne has gone to since that time,

he has been unable to obtain the least intelligence of that lovely person who appeared as fleetingly as an angel, and quite as charmingly.

Chapter Six

After a long and thorough rest, of which the wanderers certainly had need, Felix sprang energetically out of bed and hurried to dress himself with more care than usual, the father thought. Nothing fit him snugly or neatly enough; he would also have liked to have everything newer and fresher. He bounded down to the garden, snatching on the way only a little of the light refreshment that the servant had brought for the guests because the ladies would not appear in the garden for another hour.

The servant was accustomed to entertaining strangers and to giving tours of the house. And so he conducted our friend to a gallery filled only with portraits, hanging or propped on easels, all of persons who had been active in the eighteenth century, a large and glorious company; paintings as well as busts, when possible by great masters. "You will find," the custodian explained, "no picture in the entire manor that refers even obliquely to religion, tradition, mythology, legend, or fable; our master wishes the imagination to be encouraged only in order that it may take cognizance of the true. 'We spin fables enough without having to intensify this dangerous propensity of our minds by external stimuli,' he is wont to say."

Wilhelm's question as to when he might present himself to him was answered with the following intelligence: the master had ridden off very early, as was his custom. He was wont to say, "Alertness is the soul of life!" "You will see this and other mottos that reflect his views inscribed above the doorways, as here, for example, we find 'From the Useful by Way of the True to the Beautiful.'"

The ladies had already arranged breakfast under the linden trees, and Felix was clowning about, trying to outdo himself in foolish tricks and daredevil behavior, so as to call attention to himself and catch a warning or a reprimand from Hersilie. Now the sisters attempted through candor and communicativeness to gain the confidence of their reticent guest, who appealed to them. They told of a beloved cousin, who, three years absent, was now expected back at any moment, of a worthy aunt, who lived not far off in her castle and might be regarded as the guardian spirit of the family. She was described as withered by illness in body, blooming with health in spirit, as if the voice of an ancient sibyl, now become invisible, spoke pure, divine words of the greatest simplicity about human affairs.

Now the new guest directed the conversation and questions to the present. He desired to know the noble uncle better in his decisive activity. He brought up the suggested progression from the Useful by way of the True to the Beautiful, and sought to interpret the words in his own way, in which he proved successful, thereby having the good fortune to earn Juliette's approbation.

Hersilie, who had until then listened in silence with a smile, now remarked, "We women find ourselves in a peculiar situation. We are forever hearing men's maxims repeated, indeed, we must see them inscribed above our heads in golden letters, and yet in secret we girls might very well say the opposite, and it would be valid too, as is here the case. The *Beauty* finds admirers, also suitors, and finally even a husband; then she attains to the *True*, which may not always be entirely pleasing, and if she is sensible, she dedicates herself to the *Useful*, tends her house and children, and contents herself with that. Or at least I have often found that to be so. We girls have time to observe, and we usually find that which we did not seek."

A messenger arrived with word from the uncle that the entire company was invited to dine at a nearby hunting lodge and might ride or drive there. Hersilie chose to ride. Felix pleaded to be given a horse as well. It was agreed that Juliette should drive with Wilhelm, and that Felix as a page might owe his first ride to the lady of his young heart.

Meanwhile Juliette drove with her new friend through a series of plantations, all suggesting usefulness and pleasure; indeed, the innumerable fruit trees made it seem doubtful whether all of the fruit could be consumed.

"You came into our company by way of such an odd antechamber and encountered things that are really unusual and curious, so I take it you wish to know how they are all connected. All of this is based on the spirit and intentions of my excellent uncle. The prime of this noble person coincided with the era of Beccaria and Filangieri; the maxims of a general humanitarianism were influential everywhere. This general notion, however, was developed by Uncle's ambitious spirit and firm character according to his own sentiments, which were oriented strictly toward the practical. He did not deny that he had altered the liberal motto, 'the best for the most' according to his own ideas to 'the desirable for the many.' The 'most' cannot be found or recognized, and what the 'best' is, can even less be determined. 'The many,' however, are always around us; what they desire, we can discover, what they ought to desire, we can consider, and thus something significant can always be done and accomplished. It is in this spirit," she continued, "that everything you see here has been planted, built, organized, and indeed all for an immediate, easily grasped purpose; all this was done to benefit the large mountainous region nearby. This

excellent man, having both energy and fortune, said to himself, 'No child up there shall lack for a cherry, an apple, which children rightly crave; the housewife shall suffer no lack of cabbage or turnips, or any other vegetable for her pot, so that our wretched consumption of potatoes may at least be held in check.' In this spirit, in this manner he seeks to accomplish what his possessions make possible, and thus for many years now vendors of both sexes have prepared themselves to deliver fruit to the deepest ravines in the mountains."

"I myself enjoyed it as much as a child," Wilhelm replied; "there, where I would not have expected to encounter it, among pines and bluffs, I was less surprised to discover a true spirit of piety than refreshing, fresh fruit. The gifts of the spirit are everywhere at home; the gifts of Nature are sparingly distributed over the earth."

"Furthermore our worthy lord brought various necessities from afar to the mountains; in those buildings near their feet you will find stores of salt and spices. He lets others worry about tobacco and brandy; these are not necessities, he says, but addictions, and for them purveyors enough will turn up."

Once arrived at the appointed place, a spacious forester's lodge in the woods, the company gathered and found a small table already set. "Let us be seated," Hersilie said; "this is our uncle's chair, to be sure, but he will doubtless not come, as usual. In a sense I am glad that our new guest, as I hear, will not stay long with us; for it would surely be tiresome to make the acquaintance of our cast of characters. It is the one eternally repeated in novels and plays: an eccentric uncle, one gentle and one merry niece, a wise aunt, household companions of the usual stripe; and if the nephew were to return now, he would meet a whimsical traveler, who might perhaps bring an even stranger companion with him, and so the whole dreary play would be complete and translated into reality."

"We should respect our uncle's idiosyncrasies," Juliette remarked. "They burden no one, but rather contribute to everyone's well-being. A set hour for dining happens to be irksome to him; seldom does he observe it; indeed he asserts that one of the finest inventions of recent times is dining *à la carte*."

Among many other subjects, they came to speak of the worthy gentleman's proclivity for having inscriptions everywhere. "My sister," Hersilie said, "can interpret them all; she and the curator vie with one another in understanding them; but I find that you can reverse them and that they are then just as true, if not more so."

"I do not deny," replied Wilhelm, "that there are sayings among them that seem to cancel themselves out; I saw, for example, prominently inscribed: 'Possessions and Common Property'; do not those two concepts negate each other?"

Hersilie joined in: "Our uncle seems to have borrowed such inscriptions from the Orientals, who venerate the sayings from the Koran on all their walls more than they understand them." Juliette, without allowing herself to be distracted, responded to Wilhelm's question: "If you paraphrase those few words, their meaning will at once shine forth."

After several other comments, Juliette continued to explain what was meant: "Let each seek to value, to preserve, to increase the property allotted him by Nature, by Fate; let him reach as far about him with all his skill as he is able, but let him always consider how others may participate in it: for the wealthy are valued only insofar as others reap benefits through them."

When they then tried to think of examples, our friend found himself in his element; they vied with one another, outdid themselves in their eagerness to find those laconic words quite true. Why, it was asked, is a ruler revered, if not because he can put each subject to work, further him, favor him, and in a sense let him share in his absolute power? Why do all look to the wealthy man if not because he, the neediest, always seeks others to participate in his surplus? Why do all men envy the poet? Because his nature makes communication necessary, indeed is itself communication. The musician is more fortunate than the painter; he gives welcome gifts directly of himself, whereas the latter gives only when the gift has been separated from himself.

Now they proceeded to generalize: a man should cherish every sort of possession, should make himself the center from which all common property can issue forth; he must be an egoist, lest he become an egotist, must conserve, that he may contribute. What good is it to give goods and possessions to the poor? It is more laudable to act as an administrator for them. That is the meaning of the maxim "Possessions and Common Property": the capital should not be touched, for in the course of events the interest will in any case belong to everyone.

It was revealed in the discussion that some people had reproached the uncle because his estates did not bring in what they ought. He replied, however, "I regard the reduction in earnings as an expenditure that affords me pleasure, because I make life easier for others; I do not even have the bother of handling this contribution myself, and thus everything balances out."

In this manner the ladies conversed with their new friend on a multitude of subjects, and as mutual trust increased, they came to speak of the cousin who was expected soon.

"We think his curious behavior has been arranged with our uncle. For several years he has not been heard from; instead he sends charming gifts that hint at his whereabouts. Now he suddenly writes from very close by, but will not come until we have given him a report of

our circumstances. This behavior is not natural; and we must discover what lies behind it before his return. This evening we shall give you a bundle of letters from which you can gather the rest." Hersilie added, "Yesterday I introduced you to a foolish vagabond, and today you shall hear about a demented traveler." "You must admit," added Juliette, "this communication is not without an ulterior motive."

Hersilie was just asking rather impatiently what had happened to the dessert, when a message came that the uncle was expecting the company to join him for dessert in the arbor. On the way they caught sight of a field kitchen, the cook busy packing up the spotlessly washed casseroles, bowls, and plates with considerable clatter. In a roomy arbor they found the old gentleman sitting at a large, round, freshly laid table, where the most beautiful fruit, tempting pastries, and the finest sweetmeats were being served in profusion as the company took their seats. At the uncle's inquiry as to what had been happening and how they had amused themselves, Hersilie broke in impetuously, "Our dear guest might have been confused by your laconic inscriptions, had Juliette not come to his aid with a running commentary."

"You are forever teasing Juliette," the uncle replied, "but she is a good girl, who still wants to learn and understand more."

"I should like to forget much of what I know, and what I have understood is not worth much," Hersilie replied merrily.

At this Wilhelm spoke up, remarking thoughtfully, "I have great respect for pithily formulated sayings, especially when they prompt me to ponder the opposite position and to bring the two into agreement."

"Quite right," the uncle responded, "indeed, reasonable men have no more fitting occupation for an entire lifetime."

In the meantime the table was gradually filling up, so that latecomers could hardly find a place. The two stewards had come, huntsmen, horse trainers, gardeners, foresters, and others whose calling was not immediately evident. Each had something to tell and communicate about his most recent experiences; the old gentleman enjoyed these narratives, and even elicited them by asking sympathetic questions. But at length he rose, and taking leave of the company, which was not to stir, departed with the two administrators. All had partaken of the fruit, and the young people, though somewhat wild in appearance, had enjoyed the sweets. One after another stood up, saluted those who remained, and went on his way.

The ladies, who perceived that the guest was observing the goings-on with some wonderment, explained as follows: "Here you again see the effect of our worthy uncle's idiosyncrasies; he asserts that no invention of the present century deserves more admiration than that at inns one can now eat à la carte at separate tables; as soon as he became

aware of this he sought to introduce it in his family for himself and others. When he is in especially good humor, he likes to give a lively description of the horrors of a family dinner, where everyone comes to the table engrossed in his own thoughts, unwilling to listen, speaking distractedly, or sitting in glum silence, and should ill luck have it that small children are present, creating most unnecessary tension with improvised pedagogical measures. 'There are so many evils we have to put up with,' he says, 'but from this one I have managed to liberate myself.' He appears seldom at our table and then occupies his place but briefly. He takes his field kitchen with him, usually dines alone, letting others fend for themselves. But when he does offer breakfast, dessert, or other refreshments, then all the scattered members of the household gather and enjoy what is placed before them, as you have witnessed. That gives him pleasure; but no one may come who does not bring a good appetite, and each must rise when he has had his fill; in this way our uncle is assured of always being surrounded by people who are enjoying themselves. 'If one wishes to give pleasure,' I have heard him say, 'one must strive to bestow upon people that which they can seldom or never obtain for themselves.' "

On the way home an unexpected mishap threw the company into some agitation. Hersilie said to Felix, who was riding beside her, "Look over there—what kind of flowers are those? They have covered the entire southern slope of the hill; I have never seen them before." Felix at once spurred his horse, galloped off, and was returning with a great bunch of blooming crowns, which he waved from afar, when he and the horse suddenly vanished. He had fallen into a ditch. Two riders promptly broke away from the company and raced toward the spot.

Wilhelm wanted to alight from the carriage, but Juliette forbade it: "Help has reached him already, and our rule in such cases is that only he may go who brings help; the surgeon is already there." Hersilie reined in her horse. "Yes," she said, "for a general physician there is seldom need, but there is for a surgeon at every moment." Already Felix came galloping up with his head bandaged, holding his blooming booty and waving it high in the air. Well pleased with himself, he handed the bouquet to his lady, and in return Hersilie gave him a bright-colored light kerchief. "That white bandage does not suit you," she said; "this will be gayer." And so they reached home, reassured, but in a more thoughtful mood.

It was now late, and they parted, cordially looking forward to seeing each other on the morrow; the following exchange of letters, however, kept our friend awake and preoccupied for several hours more.

Lenardo to the Aunt

After three years, here at last is the first letter from me, dear Aunt, true to our agreement, which was certainly peculiar enough. I wanted

to see the world and surrender myself to it, and for this period I wanted to forget my homeland, from which I came and to which I hoped to return. I wanted to retain a complete impression, and details were not to confuse me in foreign parts. Meanwhile the necessary signs of life passed back and forth from time to time. I received money, and little gifts for my near and dear were delivered to you for distribution. From the goods I sent, you could tell where I was and how I was faring. From the wines Uncle could certainly taste out my whereabouts; and the laces, the knick-knacks, the steel implements marked my path through Brabant to Paris to London for the ladies. And so I shall find on your writing, sewing, and tea tables, on your negligées and ball gowns, many a reminder to which I can attach my account of my travels. You accompanied me without hearing from me, and perhaps you are not even eager to hear more. For me, on the other hand, it is extremely urgent to be apprised through your good offices of how things stand in the circle I am about to rejoin. I should like to arrive from foreign parts like a real foreigner, who, in order to be pleasant, first informs himself about the wishes and likings of the members of the household, and is not so vain as to think that he will be well received simply for his beautiful eyes or hair. Please write to me, then, about my good uncle, about the dear nieces, about yourself, about our relations, both near and distant, and also about the old and new servants. Enough, let your practiced quill, which you have not dipped on your nephew's behalf in so long a time, for once hold sway over the paper for his benefit. Your informative missive will also serve as the letter of introduction with which I shall announce myself as soon as I have received it. Seeing me in your arms thus depends on you. One changes much less than one thinks, and circumstances usually remain fairly constant as well. Not what has changed but what has remained, what has gradually waxed or waned is what I want to recognize again at a glance, and I want to discover myself once again in a familiar looking glass. Please give my warm greetings to all our dear ones, and do believe that the odd manner of my absence and return implies an affection sometimes lacking where constant involvement and lively communication are maintained. A thousand greetings to each and all!

Postscript

Please do not fail, dear Aunt, to send me word also of our men of affairs, and how things stand with our magistrates and tenants. What has become of Valerine, the daughter of the tenant whom our uncle dismissed shortly before my departure, with justification, to be sure, but still, it seems to me, rather harshly? You see, I still recall many

details; probably I remember everything. You shall examine me on the past, once you have informed me about the present.

The Aunt to Juliette

Finally, dear Children, a letter after three years of silence. How very odd these odd people are! He believes his wares and tokens are as good as a single good word that a friend may write or speak to a friend. He actually imagines we are in his debt, and now wants us to do what he himself in so harsh and unfriendly a manner refused to do. How should we proceed? For my part, I would promptly accommodate his wishes with a long letter, if my headache had not set in, which scarcely allows me to finish this note. We all long to see him. Do take over this task, my Dear Ones. If I have recovered before you have finished, I shall do my share. Select the persons and circumstances you prefer to describe. Divide the task between you. You will do everything better than I would myself. The courier will bring word from you, I trust?

Juliette to her Aunt

We read your letter at once, considered it, and are giving our opinion by way of the courier, each of us separately, having first assured you together that we are not so kindly disposed as our dear Aunt toward that spoiled nephew. While he kept his cards hidden from us for three years, and still keeps them hidden, we are supposed to show ours and play an open game against his secret one. That is by no means fair, and yet it may pass; for the cleverest person often cheats himself by trying to protect too much. It is only about the ways and means that we are in disagreement, about what we should send to him, and how. To write what one thinks of one's own relatives strikes us, at least, as a peculiar task. Normally one thinks about them only in specific cases, when they give reason for particular pleasure or particular annoyance. Otherwise everyone leaves everyone else to his own devices. You alone could do it, dear Aunt, for you possess both the insight and the fair-mindedness. Hersilie, who, as you know, is easily inflamed, gave me on the spur of the moment a humorous review of the entire family; I wish I had it down on paper to coax a smile from you despite your pain, but not to send to him. My suggestion, however, is to share with him our correspondence of the last three years. He can read his way through it, if he has the courage, or he can come and see for himself what he does not want to read. Your letters to me, dear Aunt, are in perfect order and are at your disposal. Hersilie does not concur; her excuse is the disorder in her papers, etc., as she herself will tell you.

Hersilie to her Aunt

I will and must be very brief, dear Aunt, for the courier is making a rather rude show of haste. I consider it excessive good nature and altogether improper to share our letters with Lenardo. Why should he know the nice things we said about him, why should he know the bad things we said about him, to learn from the last even more than from the first that we are fond of him! Keep him on a short rein, I beg of you! There is something so calculating and arrogant in this demand, in this conduct, such as men usually display when they arrive from foreign parts. They never take those who have stayed at home quite seriously. Use your migraine as an excuse. He will come anyway; and if he did not come, we should simply wait a while longer. Perhaps then he will think of a way to introduce himself into our midst in an unusual, mysterious manner, to make our acquaintance without being recognized, and who knows what else might be part of a clever man's plan. Wouldn't that be charming and delightful! It would bring all sorts of relationships to light that he could never expect to discover with the highly diplomatic entry into the family that he now intends.

The courier! The courier! Govern your old servants better, or send young ones! This one can be distracted neither with flattery nor with wine. A thousand good wishes!

Postscript upon Postscript

Tell me: what does our cousin want with Valerine in his postscript? That question caught my attention on two accounts. She is the only person he mentions by name. The rest of us are merely nieces, aunts, agents, not people but categories. Valerine, the daughter of our magistrate! To be sure, a beautiful blond girl who may have caught the eye of our fine cousin before his departure. She is married, well and happily; that I need not tell you. But he knows that no more than he knows anything else about us. Do not forget to inform him, likewise in a postscript, that Valerine grew more beautiful by the day and therefore also made an excellent match. She is the wife of a wealthy landowner. The beautiful blond is married. Make that perfectly clear to him. But now, dear Aunt, that is not all. How he could remember the blond beauty so accurately and at the same time confuse her with the daughter of that miserable tenant, a hoyden of a brunette called Nachodine, of whose whereabouts I know nothing—that is completely incomprehensible to me and especially intrigues me. For it does seem certain that our dear cousin, while boasting of his good memory, mixes up names and persons in a curious fashion. Perhaps he senses his weakness and wants to refresh his faded impressions by means of your

account. Keep him on a short rein, I beg of you; but try to discover what is afoot with Valerine and Nachodine, and whatever other -ines, -trines, may still occupy his fancy, while the -ettes and -ilies have all vanished. The courier! The accursed courier!

The Aunt to the Nieces (dictated)

Why dissemble toward those with whom one must pass one's life! Lenardo, for all his peculiarities, deserves our trust. I am sending him your two letters; from them he will become acquainted with you, and I hope the rest of us will unconsciously take an opportunity also to present ourselves to him soon! Farewell! I am in great pain.

Hersilie to the Aunt

Why dissemble toward those with whom one passes one's life! Lenardo is a spoiled nephew. It is revolting that you are sending him our letters. He will not come to know us through them, and all I hope for is an opportunity to present myself soon in another light. You make others suffer by suffering yourself and loving blindly. A rapid recovery from your pain! Your love cannot be helped.

The Aunt to Hersilie

I would have put your last note into the packet for Lenardo, had I held to the intention prompted by my incorrigible fondness, my pain, and my desire for convenience. Your letters have not gone off.

Wilhelm to Natalie

Man is a sociable, talkative being; he derives great pleasure from exercising the abilities that have been given to him, even if nothing more should come of it. How often people complain in society that one person does not let another get a word in edgewise, and likewise one could say that one person does not let another get a letter in edgewise, if writing were not usually an enterprise that one must undertake by oneself and alone.

We have absolutely no idea how much people write. I shall not even mention what gets printed, although that is already enough. But how much circulates in the form of letters and messages and stories, anecdotes, descriptions in letters and essays of current circumstances of individuals, that can be imagined only if one passes some time with

cultivated families, as I am now doing. In the sphere in which I presently find myself, they spend almost as much time communicating to their friends and relatives what they are doing as they spend actually doing it. This observation, which has thrust itself upon me in the last few days, is one I am the more glad to make in that my new friends' passion for writing allows me to become acquainted with their circumstances rapidly and from all sides. They trust me, they hand me a packet of letters, a few notebooks of travel journals, the confessions of a soul not yet at peace with itself, and so I am at home in no time. I know those with whom they regularly associate and those whom I shall soon meet, and I know almost more about them than they do themselves, for they are caught up in their circumstances, while I hover above them, always guided by your hand, discussing everything with you. And it is my first stipulation, before I accept any confidences, that I be allowed to communicate everything to you. So here are a few letters, which will introduce you to the circle in which I am currently revolving, without breaking my vow or circumventing it.

Chapter Seven

Very early in the morning our friend made his way alone to the gallery and took pleasure in the many familiar faces; a catalogue conveniently at hand identified those whom he did not recognize. Portraits, like biographies, have an interest all their own; a significant person, who cannot be conceived without a context, steps forward separately and places himself before us as before a mirror. We are asked to give him our undivided attention, to occupy ourselves exclusively with him, as he is contentedly occupied with himself before the glass. It may be a general, who now represents the entire army, while behind him the very kings and emperors for whom he fights recede into the gloom. The adept courtier stands before us, as if he were paying court to us, and we do not think of the great world for which he actually cultivated such grace. Our visitor was surprised by the similarity of many figures long dead to living persons whom he knew and had seen in the flesh, indeed, their similarity to himself! And why indeed should identical twins be born to only one mother? Why should not the great mother of the gods and men be able to bring forth the same image from her fruitful womb simultaneously or at intervals?

And finally the sensitive observer could not deny that many attractive but also many repelling images passed before his eyes.

In such reflections the master of the house came upon him, and Wilhelm discussed these matters with him freely, seeming thereby to

gain his favor more and more. For he was kindly escorted to the inner chambers, where he saw precious paintings of prominent men from the sixteenth century, fully present, just as they had lived and breathed, without regarding themselves in a glass or in the viewer, self-reliant and self-sufficient, impressive for their sheer presence, not for any will or intention.

The master of the house, pleased that the guest could fully appreciate such a richly evoked past, showed him autographs by several of the people about whom they had spoken earlier in the gallery. Finally he even showed him relics which the original owners were known to have used, to have touched.

"This is my sort of poetry," the master of the house said with a smile. "My imagination needs something to cleave to; I can scarcely believe that a thing has existed if it is no longer present. For such relics of the past I try to get the most reliable evidence, otherwise they would not be included in the collection. Written documents receive the most stringent examination, for I may well believe that a monk wrote a certain chronicle, but that to which he attests I seldom believe." Finally he placed before Wilhelm a blank sheet of paper, requesting him to write a few lines, but without a signature. Thereupon the guest was shown out into the hall through a tapestry-covered door, and found himself at the side of the curator.

"I am pleased," said the curator, "that our master values you. The fact that you have come out through this door proves it. But do you know what he takes you for? He thinks you are a practical pedagogue, and the boy he takes for a young man from a noble family who has been entrusted to your guidance, that he may be initiated directly into the world and its multiplicity of circumstances, according to sound principles, at an early age."

"He does me too much honor," our friend replied, "but I shall not have heard your words in vain."

At breakfast, where he found his Felix already busying himself about the ladies, they revealed to him their wish that, since he could not be detained, he should make his way to their noble aunt Makarie, and perhaps from there to their cousin, to clear up his mysterious hesitation. He would thereby at once become a member of the family, do a decided favor to all of them, and without much preparation enter into an intimate relationship with Lenardo.

Wilhelm, however, replied, "Wherever you send me, I will gladly go; I set out to see and to think; in your home I have experienced and learned more than I could have hoped, and, on the path being charted for me, I am convinced that I shall discover and learn more than I can expect."

"And you, you little n'er-do-well, what will you learn?" Hersilie asked, to which the boy replied boldly, "I will learn to write, so that I can send you a letter, and to ride like no one else, so that I can always come right back to you." To this Hersilie replied thoughtfully, "Things have never worked out well with admirers of my own age; it seems as though the next generation will soon make amends for that."

But now we feel with our friend how painfully the hour of leave-taking approaches, and we should like to convey a clear idea of the idiosyncrasies of his excellent host, of the peculiarities of this extraordinary man. But lest we judge him falsely, we must direct our attention to his origins and to the formation of this worthy person, already advanced in years. What we were able to discover is the following:

His grandfather lived in England as an active member of an embassy, just in the last years of the sublime William Penn. The lofty benevolence, the pure intentions, the unflagging efforts of such an excellent man, the conflict in which he therefore found himself with the world, the perils and pressures to which the noble man seemed to succumb, aroused in the receptive mind of the young man a decided interest. He made common cause with the undertaking and finally moved to America himself. The father of our gentleman was born in Philadelphia, and both of them took pride in having contributed to the increased general freedom of religious practice in the Colonies.

Here the maxim developed that a self-contained nation, which had traditionally been in agreement about religion and morals, should guard itself against foreign influences and against all innovation. But in new territory, where it is desirable that people come together from many quarters, the most unconstrained economic activity possible and the greatest freedom in matters of morality and religion should be permitted.

The lively urge to get to America was widespread at the beginning of the eighteenth century, since everyone who felt at all uncomfortable over here hoped to make himself free over there. This urge was nourished by the desirable lands one could acquire, before the population had spread farther west. Entire so-called counties were still for sale along the boundaries of the inhabited territory, and the father of our gentleman had also established himself there with significant holdings.

But as there often develops in sons opposition to their fathers' ideas and arrangements, so it was here, too. Our host, arriving in Europe as a youth, felt like a different person; this priceless culture, born thousands of years ago, which had grown, expanded, been diminished, oppressed but never entirely suppressed, which had drawn new breath, revived, and continued to generate boundless activity, gave him an entirely new concept of what mankind can hope to accomplish. He

preferred to accept his share of these great, incalculable advantages and to submerge himself in the orderly, active mass, rather than to remain across the sea, playing the role of Orpheus and Lycurgus centuries too late. He said, "A man needs patience everywhere, he must have consideration for others everywhere, and I would rather come to terms with my king, that he may allow me this or that prerogative, would rather compromise with my neighbors, that they may release me from certain restrictions if I yield to them on some other matter, than thrash around with the Iroquois in order to drive them away, or defraud them with contracts in order to expel them from their swamps, where one is tortured to death by mosquitoes."

He took over the family estates, administering them liberally, organizing them productively, shrewdly annexing large, seemingly useless, adjoining lands, and so, within the cultivated world, which in a certain sense can also often be called a wilderness, he amassed considerable holdings and shaped them, which, for those confined conditions, is still utopian enough.

Freedom of religion is therefore natural in this district, the public ritual being viewed as a voluntary profession of faith that people belong together in life and death; but accordingly, great care is taken to see that no one stays aloof from the others.

In each settlement one sees a moderately large building; this is the space that the landowner owes the community. Here the elders come together to take counsel, here the members gather to receive instruction and pious encouragement. But the building is also intended for merry-making; here wedding dances are held and holidays are concluded with music.

Nature herself can show us the way to such practices. In good weather we will usually see gathered under the same linden tree the elders in council, the community for edification, and the youth dancing. Against life's somber background, merriment stands out so beautifully; solemnity and holiness moderate pleasure, and only through moderation do we sustain ourselves.

Should the community have other wishes and money sufficient to realize them, it is free to dedicate separate structures to the separate activities.

But if all this serves the interests of public life and common morality, true religion remains something inward, indeed individual, for it has to do with the conscience alone, which is to be aroused or placated. Aroused when it broods along dully, inactively, ineffectively; placated when it threatens to embitter life with remorseful restiveness. For the conscience is closely related to care, which threatens to turn to anguish when we are to blame for having brought some evil upon ourselves or others.

But since we are not always disposed toward reflections such as are required here, nor do we always wish to be prodded into them, Sunday is set aside as a day on which anything weighing on a person in a religious, moral, social, or economic sense must be discussed.

"If you were to stay with us for a time," remarked Juliette, "our Sunday here would certainly not displease you. The day after tomorrow you would notice a great stillness in the morning; everyone stays alone and applies himself to a prescribed subject of reflection. Man is a limited creature; and Sunday is devoted to considering our limitations. If they be physical ills which we perhaps scarcely noticed in the whirl of the week's affairs, then we must seek out the physician at the beginning of the new week. If our limitations are financial and in the larger sense social, then our officials are required to hold meetings. If what oppresses us is spiritual, moral, we are to turn to a friend, to someone well disposed toward us, to request his advice, his intervention. In short, it is the rule that no one may carry over into the new week any matter that disturbs or torments him. From burdensome duties only the most conscientious execution can free us, and what cannot be solved at all we leave finally to God, as the Being who establishes and looses all constraints. Our uncle himself does not fail to conduct such an examination, and there have even been times when he discussed with us in confidence a matter which he could not master at the moment. But for the most part he consults with our noble aunt, whom he visits from time to time for such assistance. He also regularly asks on Sunday evenings whether everything has been confessed and disposed of. From this you can see that we exercise great care not to be taken into your order, the community of the renunciants!"

"A fine life!" Hersilie exclaimed. "If I resign myself for one day a week, I have the benefit of it for all three hundred sixty-five!"

But before his departure our friend received from the younger steward a package with a missive enclosed, from which we excerpt the following passage:

"It seems to me that every nation has its own prevailing inclination, whose satisfaction is necessary for its happiness, and indeed one can observe this in different people as well. When a person loves to listen to full, gracefully arranged notes, seeking mental and spiritual pleasure from them, will he thank me if I present him with the most splendid painting? And a devotee of painting wants to see and will reject attempts to stir his phantasy with a poem or a novel. Who is so talented that he can enjoy in a variety of ways?

"But you, transient friend, struck me as such a person, and if you could appreciate the charm of a refined French aberration, you will not, I hope, disdain the simple, faithful honesty of German circum-

stances and will forgive me if, true to my nature and way of thought, to my upbringing and position, I can find no more pleasing image than that presented by the German middle class in its simple domesticity.

"May you enjoy this tale and think of me."

Chapter Eight

Who Is the Traitor?

"No! No!" he exclaimed, as he strode hastily and angrily into his assigned chamber and put down the lamp. "No! It is not possible! But where should I turn? For the first time I am of another mind, have different feelings, other wishes than his.—Oh, Father! if you could be here invisible and could look straight through me, you would convince yourself that I am still the same, still your loyal, obedient, loving son.—To say no! To oppose my father's fondest, long cherished wish! How do I break the news? How do I express it? No, I cannot marry Julie.—I shudder even to speak the thought aloud. And how can I go to him and reveal this to him, my dear, good father? He will stare at me in amazement and shake his head without a word; that perceptive, intelligent, learned man will be speechless. Oh, woe is me!—I know very well to whom I would confide this pain, this embarrassment, whom I would choose to speak for me! Of all those I know, you, Lucinde, are the one! And first I should like to tell you how much I love you, how I surrender myself to you, and beseech you: 'Speak for me, and if you can love me, if you will be mine, then speak for us both!' "

Short though this heartfelt and passionate soliloquy was, it will take many words to explain it.

Professor N. of N. had one little boy of remarkable beauty, whom he left in the care of his wife, a most worthy woman, until the lad was eight years old; she it was who directed the child's hours and days toward living, learning, and good conduct at all times. She died, and in that moment the father felt personally incapable of devoting the same care to the child's upbringing. Until then everything had been agreed upon by the parents; they both worked toward the same end, decided jointly what should be done in the immediate future, and the mother was adept at carrying it out. The widower's sorrow was now double and triple, for he knew well, and daily saw proof of it, that for the son of a professor to acquire a good education at the academy required a veritable miracle.

In this distress he turned to his friend, the chief bailiff in R., with whom he had earlier discussed plans for closer ties between their fam-

ilies. This friend had good advice for him and was able to arrange for the boy to be admitted to one of the fine schools flourishing in Germany where attention is given to the whole person, to body, soul, and mind.

Now the boy was safely established, but the father found himself terribly lonely: deprived of his wife, deprived of the pleasant company of his boy, whom he had seen being educated as he wished, with no effort of his own. Here, too, the friendship of the chief bailiff stood him in good stead; the distance between their dwellings vanished in the face of his pleasure and delight in movement and distraction. And here the orphaned scholar found in a likewise motherless family two beautiful daughters growing up, each appealing in her own way; and both fathers became more and more attached to the thought, the prospect, of eventually seeing their families united in the most gratifying fashion. They lived in a fortunate principality; the able bailiff was secure in his position for life and would probably be able to choose his successor. Now, in accord with a sensible family and ministerial plan, Lucidor was to prepare himself for the important position occupied by his future father-in-law. And in fact he progressed from stage to stage. No pains were spared to impart to him all the knowledge, to develop in him all the skills of which the state always has need: attention to those laws strictly enforced by the courts and also to those laxer ones for whose administration intelligence and resourcefulness are important; accounting for daily use, not excluding more complicated auditing procedures, but all of it directly connected with life, as would certainly and inevitably be needed.

In this spirit Lucidor had completed his schooling, and now his father and his benefactor prepared him for the academy. He displayed the finest talent for everything, and Nature had also endowed him with the rare good fortune of being motivated by love for his father and respect for his friend to develop his abilities in precisely those directions they indicated, first out of obedience, later out of conviction. He was sent to an academy abroad, and both his own letters and the reports of his teachers and tutors testified that he was following the course that would lead to the desired goal. The only criticism was that in some cases he had shown himself too impatiently upright. At this his father shook his head, and the chief bailiff nodded. Who would not have wished to have such a son!

In the meanwhile the two daughters, Julie and Lucinde, were growing up. Julie, the younger one, playful, charming, unsettled, most entertaining; the older one difficult to categorize, for she embodied precisely those qualities of honesty and purity which we find desirable for all women. The two families visited each other in turn, and in the house of the professor Julie found inexhaustible sources of entertainment.

Geography, which he enlivened with topography, was part of his specialty, and no sooner had Julie discovered one of the Homann volumes, of which the professor owned a whole series, than she set about studying all the cities, evaluating them, preferring some and rejecting others. All ports enjoyed her special favor; if other cities wished to secure even partial approval, they had to display a profusion of towers, domes, and minarets.

Her father left her for weeks at a time with his trusted friend; she genuinely gained in knowledge and insight, and became conversant with the principal features, particulars, and places of the inhabited world. She also paid close attention to the native dress of foreign nations, and when her foster father sometimes asked her jokingly whether any of the many handsome young people passing by outside the window might not appeal to her, she would say, "Oh yes, if he looks very exotic!" And since students at our academies are not known for the conventionality of their appearance, she often had occasion to take interest in one or the other; she was reminded at the sight of him of some foreign national costume, but in the end she always insisted that anyone to whom she should give her special attention would have to be at the very least a Greek, in full national regalia, for which reason she longed to visit the Leipzig Fair, where such sights could be seen in the streets.

After his dry and sometimes irritating work, nothing provided our teacher such happy moments as when he jestingly instructed the girl and secretly triumphed that he was training such a charming daughter-in-law, ever entertained and entertaining. The two fathers had agreed, by the bye, that the girls were to have no inkling of their intentions, and Lucidor, too, was kept in the dark.

Thus years passed, as they so easily do; Lucidor presented himself, accomplished, successful on all the examinations, even to the satisfaction of his higher superiors, who wished no more than to fulfill with good conscience the hopes of worthy old servants who enjoyed and deserved favor.

And so the matter had proceeded in orderly fashion to the point where Lucidor, having conducted himself admirably in lower-ranking positions, was about to enter a most advantageous situation, suited to his achievements and his desires, and located exactly halfway between the academy and the home of the chief bailiff.

Until this time the father had but hinted to his son about Julie, but he now spoke of her as his fiancée and spouse, without further doubts or reservations, emphasizing the young man's good fortune at having acquired such a living gem. In his mind's eye he pictured his daughter-in-law visiting again from time to time, busy with maps, plans, and engravings of cities; his son, for his part, recalled the lovable, merry

creature who in his childhood had always delighted him with her teasing and her friendly ways. And now Lucidor was to ride over to the chief bailiff's to have a closer look at the fully grown beauty and spend several weeks reestablishing his familiarity and acquaintance with the entire household. If, as was hoped, the young people should speedily reach an accord, Lucidor's father was to be notified, whereupon he would appear at once, so that a solemn betrothal might seal the hoped-for bliss.

Lucidor arrives; he enjoys the friendliest possible reception. He is assigned a room, unpacks, and comes down. There he finds assembled, in addition to the members of the family with whom we are already acquainted, a half-grown son, quite spoiled but clever and good-natured, so that, if one wished to consider him the jester, he was not ill-suited to the rest of the company. To the household belonged also an elderly but sound and cheerful man, quiet, refined, and intelligent, devoting his remaining years to helping others here and there. Shortly after Lucidor, another stranger arrived, a man no longer young, of distinguished appearance, dignified, polished, and most entertaining because of his knowledge of distant parts of the world. They called him Antoni.

Julie received her prospective bridegroom decorously but obligingly, while Lucinde did the honors for the household, as her sister did for herself. And so the day passed most agreeably for all, with the exception of Lucidor; he, who was in any case shy, felt compelled to ask questions from time to time, so as not to fall into complete silence; and no one appears to his advantage in such a situation.

He was thoroughly distracted, for from the first moment he had felt neither dislike nor aversion for Julie, but estrangement; Lucinde, on the other hand, attracted him so much that he trembled when she turned her large, clear, calm eyes upon him.

In this distress he reached his chamber the first evening and poured out his heart in that monologue with which we began. But to explain it, as well as how such a passionate flood of speech fits with what we already know of him, a brief communication is in order.

Lucidor was a young man of deep feeling, and was usually preoccupied with something other than what the immediate present required, for which reason he was never very adept at pleasantries or conversation. He was aware of this and became reticent, except on certain subjects which he had studied thoroughly and for which he commanded the necessary facts. Furthermore, both in school and later at the university he had been mistaken in his friends and had bared his soul in the wrong place; he was reluctant, therefore, to communicate anything; and reluctance renders any true communication impossible.

Toward his father he was wont to express only assent; accordingly, he poured out his heart in monologues as soon as he was alone.

The following morning he had pulled himself together, and yet he was almost jolted out of his composure when Julie's manner toward him became still friendlier, gayer, and freer. She besieged him with questions about his journeys on land and water, how as a student he had hiked through Switzerland with his bundle on his shoulder, and even crossed the Alps. Then she wished to hear all about the lovely island in the large southern lake; then, working backwards, the Rhine had to be traced from its point of origin, first through very inhospitable regions, then downstream through richly varied landscapes, until finally, between Mainz and Koblenz, the moment comes to release the great river with honor from its last constraints and let it flow out into the wide world, toward the sea.

Lucidor felt much relieved at this, and he told his story so willingly and so well that Julie exclaimed, quite enchanted, that these sights should be enjoyed in the company of another. At which Lucidor again took fright, for he thought he detected an allusion to their common journey through life.

But he was soon rescued from his duties as narrator, for the stranger they called Antoni rapidly eclipsed all the mountain springs, cliffs at water's edge, constrained or liberated rivers: he made straight for Genoa; Livorno lay not far off, the most interesting features of the countryside were, so to speak, snatched in passing; one had to have seen Naples before one died, but then there was still Constantinople, which should likewise not be missed. Antoni's description of the wide world captured the imagination of all his listeners, although he could summon less passion for his narrative. But Julie, quite beside herself, was still by no means satisfied—she still longed to hear about Alexandria, Cairo, but especially the Pyramids, of which she had acquired considerable knowledge from her presumed father-in-law's instruction.

That evening Lucidor (he had hardly closed his door, not yet set down his candle) exclaimed, "Think what you are doing! This is serious. You have studied serious matters and thought them through; but what good is training in justice if you do not act justly? Look upon yourself as a legal representative, forget yourself and do what you would be obligated to do for another person. Everything is tangled in the worst way! The stranger is apparently here for Lucinde's sake, and she shows him the finest, noblest social and domestic attentions; the little madcap would like to go dashing through the world with almost anyone, at the drop of a hat. Besides that she is a rogue; her interest in cities and countries is a farce to reduce us to silence. But why do I find this business so confused and complicated? Is not the chief bailiff a most understanding, perceptive, loving intermediary? Tell him how

you feel and think, and he will be able to follow your thoughts, if not your feelings. He can persuade Father of anything. And are not both his daughters? And what does that Anton Rover want with Lucinde, who is born for domesticity, to be happy and to bring happiness there to others? Why not attach that bouncing quicksilver to the wandering Jew—that would make a charming pair!”

In the morning Lucidor went downstairs, fully resolved to speak with the father and therefore to approach him directly during his usual hour of leisure. How great was his sorrow, his perplexity, when he learned that the chief bailiff had departed on business, and was not expected back until the day after next. Julie seemed to have chosen this as her day for travel; she stuck close by the world traveler, and with some joking references to domesticity, left Lucidor to Lucinde. If previously our friend had observed the noble maiden from a certain distance, forming a general impression, and had already taken her into his heart, he now had an opportunity in close proximity to discover two and three times over that which had first attracted him in general.

The good old friend of the family now stepped to the fore, in place of the absent father. He, too, had lived and loved, and now, after many a bruising in the arena of life, lived restored and cherished with the friend of his youth. He enlivened the conversation, and dwelt especially on errors in the choice of a spouse, recounting remarkable examples of prompt and belated declarations of love. Lucinde shone in her full glory. She confessed that in life chance occurrences of every sort could produce the best of results, in marriages as well; and yet it was finer and more edifying when a person could say he owed his happiness to himself, to the calm, quiet conviction of his heart, to noble intentions and prompt decisions. Tears came to Lucidor's eyes as he applauded these sentiments, after which the ladies soon withdrew. The elderly gentleman was disposed to exchange stories, and so the conversation broadened to comic anecdotes, which, however, touched our hero so personally that only a youth as well bred as he could control himself sufficiently not to burst out; but that occurred as soon as he was alone.

“I restrained myself!” he exclaimed. “I will not worry my good father with such confusion; I kept myself in check, for I regard this worthy friend of the family as the deputy of both fathers. I shall speak to him, reveal everything, he will surely mediate; indeed, he has already almost voiced my own wishes. Will he reprove in the individual case what he approves in general? Tomorrow first thing I shall seek him out; I must find relief from this distress.”

At breakfast the old gentleman did not appear; he had, it was said, talked too much the previous evening, had sat up too long and drunk a few more drops of wine than was his custom. Much was recounted in his praise, and indeed just such speeches and actions as made Lu-

cidor despair at not having turned to him at once. His discomfiture was only intensified when he learned that after such attacks the good old man sometimes remained out of sight for a full week.

A country setting has considerable advantages for sociability, particularly when the hosts are thoughtful, sensitive individuals, who have been impelled over the years to come to the aid of the natural potential of their surroundings. Such had successfully been done here. First alone, then in a long, happy marriage, with his own means, in a lucrative post, following his own vision and insight, the inclinations of his wife, even, finally, the wishes and whims of his children, the chief bailiff had first laid out and cultivated larger and smaller separate areas, and these, by degrees tastefully linked with plantings and paths, presented to anyone who strolled among them a charming, varied, and characteristic progression of scenes. The younger members of our family had their guest begin just such a pilgrimage, as indeed we all enjoy showing our grounds to a stranger, that we may view with fresh eyes that which has become ordinary to us and retain a favorable impression of it forever.

The immediate and also the more distant surroundings were very well suited to modest plantings and even to rustic details. Fertile hills alternated with well-watered meadows, so that from time to time the entire landscape was visible, without its being flat; and if the land seemed principally devoted to useful purposes, attractiveness and charm had not been forgotten.

Adjacent to the residence and the utility buildings lay pleasure gardens, orchards, and mowings; thence one wandered unexpectedly into a wood, through which a lane broad enough for driving wound back and forth. At its center, at the highest elevation, had been constructed a hall with adjoining chambers. Entering by the main door, one saw in a great mirror the finest view the entire region had to offer, then quickly turned around to recover with the help of reality from the unexpected tableau. For the approach was artfully designed and everything ingeniously hidden to achieve this surprise effect. No one entered without turning with pleasure back and forth from the mirror to Nature and from Nature to the mirror.

Once underway on this most beautiful, sunny, and lengthy day, they made a reflective tour around and through all the grounds. Here their good mother had sat of an evening, where a glorious beech had maintained a clear space all around itself. Soon afterwards Julie half-teasingly indicated the site of Lucinde's morning devotions, by a little brook among poplars and alders, with meadows sloping down on one side, cultivated fields mounting on the other. It was indescribably beautiful! One felt that one had seen this everywhere before, but nowhere with such meaningful and welcome simplicity. On the other hand, the

squire pointed out, half against Julie's will, the diminutive bowers and childish flower beds, which, next to a cozy mill, were scarcely noticeable any more. They harked back to a time when Julie, about ten years of age, had taken it into her head to become a miller and, after the death of the two old folks, to take over the mill herself and find an honest millhand to wed.

"That was at a time," Julie exclaimed, "when I knew nothing of cities built on rivers or better yet on the ocean, like Genoa etc. Your kind father, Lucidor, converted me; since then I have scarcely come here." She sat down coquettishly on a little bench, which barely held her, beneath an elder bush that had bent over too far. "Fie on crouching like this!" she exclaimed, leaped up, and darted ahead with her merry brother.

The other couple lagged behind, conversing sensibly, and in such cases good sense tends imperceptibly toward emotion. Walking past varied simple natural objects and reflecting calmly upon them, they could discuss in detail how a thoughtful, intelligent person can produce something from them, how insight into what is available, along with a sense of needs, can work wonders in making the world habitable, then populating it, and finally overpopulating it. Lucinde accounted for everything, and despite her modesty could not conceal that the convenient and pleasing links between separate parts of the grounds were her achievement, under the guidance, direction, or encouragement of her revered mother.

But since even the longest day eventually gives way to evening, they had to think about their return, and as they were planning an agreeable roundabout way, the merry brother demanded that they take the shorter path, even though it was less pleasant and indeed more fatiguing. "For," he exclaimed, "you have been showing off your plantings and landscaping, and how you have beautified and improved the landscape for artistic eyes and tender hearts; but now let me have some credit as well."

Now they had to make their way across plowed fields and along bumpy paths, even across swampy spots on stones scattered at random; some distance off they spied all sorts of machinery piled high in confusion. Examined more closely, this proved to be a large pleasure ground, arranged with a certain sense for popular taste. And so there stood at proper intervals the great wheel, where the ascending and descending seats remained calmly horizontal; other swings of various kinds; swinging ropes, see-saws, bowling and ninepin alleys, and everything imaginable in a large pasture to occupy and entertain crowds of people in a variety of equally interesting ways. "This," he exclaimed, "is my own invention and design. And although my father contributed the funds and a clever fellow provided his brains, without me, whom

you often call foolish, mind and means would never have come together."

Thus in a cheerful frame of mind all four returned home at sundown. Antoni made an appearance, but the young lady, who had still not had enough from such an eventful day, ordered the horses and rode off through the countryside to visit a friend, desperate at not having seen her for two days. The four who remained behind unexpectedly felt ill at ease, and it was even said that the father's absence disquieted the household. The conversation was beginning to flag when suddenly the merry squire sprang up and, quickly returning with a book, offered to read aloud. Lucinde did not refrain from asking how he came by such an idea, which he had not had for years; he replied cheerfully, "Everything occurs to me at the right moment, which is more than you can say for yourself." He read a series of authentic fairy tales, the sort which lure a person out of himself, gratify his wishes, and make him forget all the restrictions that hem us in, even at our happiest moments.

"What do I do now?" Lucidor exclaimed, when he was finally alone; "time is short; I have no confidence in Antoni, he is so remote; I do not know who he is or how he got into this house, or what he is seeking. He seems attentive toward Lucinde, so what could I hope from him? I have no choice but to approach Lucinde herself; she must know my feelings, she first of all. And that was my first instinct; why do we let ourselves be led astray down the paths of cleverness! The first shall now be the last, and I hope to reach my goal!"

On Saturday morning Lucidor was dressed early, pacing back and forth in his room, considering what he should say to Lucinde, when he overheard a sort of playful quarrel outside his door, which promptly flew open. The merry squire shoved in a boy with coffee and pastry for the guest, while he himself brought cold meats and wine. "You should go ahead of me," cried the squire, "the guest must be served first, and I am used to serving myself. My friend! Today I come rather early and noisily; let us enjoy our breakfast in peace, and then see what to do, for we cannot expect much from the rest of the company. The little one has not yet returned from visiting her friend; those two must pour out their hearts to each other at least once in a fortnight to keep them from bursting. On Saturdays Lucinde is of no use, she always prepares her household accounts punctually for our father. I was supposed to be involved in that, too, but heaven forbid! If I know what something costs, I cannot enjoy a single bite. Guests are expected for tomorrow, the old man has not yet recovered his equilibrium, Antoni has gone off hunting, so let us do likewise!"

Muskets, pouches, and hounds were ready for them when they came into the courtyard, and soon they were off to the fields, where a young

hare and a poor, insignificant bird were all they shot. In the meantime, they chatted about their domestic and social circumstances. Antoni was mentioned, and Lucidor did not fail to inquire further about him. The merry squire assured him, with a certain complacency, that he had already seen straight through that strange man, despite his mystifications. "He is," he continued, "surely the son of a rich mercantile family that went bankrupt just when he, in the fullness of youth, thought to turn his strength and enthusiasm to large business dealings, and also to partake of the many pleasures the world had to offer. Dashed from the height of his hopes, he pulled himself together and achieved for others what he could no longer do for himself and his family. Thus he traveled all over the world, becoming thoroughly acquainted with its ways and mutual exchange, and did not overlook his own interests in the process. Tireless activity and proven integrity won him the full and unswerving confidence of many. Thus he made acquaintances and friends everywhere, and indeed it is clear that his fortune is distributed around the world, wherever he has friends, for which reason his presence in all four corners of the world is required from time to time."

The merry young squire had recounted all this more naively and circumstantially, adding many humorous asides, as though he wished to spin out his tale as long as possible.

"How far his association with my father goes back! They think I do not notice anything because I do not bother with anything. But I see it all the more clearly precisely because it is none of my business. He has deposited a good deal of money with my father, who has invested it soundly and profitably. Just yesterday Antoni slipped the old man a jewel case; I have never seen anything simpler, more beautiful, or more precious, even though I had only a glimpse of it, because it is being kept hidden. Probably it is intended to be bestowed on his bride for her pleasure, joy, and future security. Antoni has placed his trust in Lucinde. But when I see the two of them together, I cannot think them a well-matched pair. The harum-scarum one would be better for him, and I think she would rather have him, too, than the older girl would; really, sometimes she looks at the old curmudgeon so gaily and with such interest, as if she would love to jump into a coach with him and fly away." Lucidor contained himself. He did not know what to reply. Everything he heard was greatly to his liking. The squire continued: "In general, the girl has a perverse fondness for older people; I think she would as gladly have married your father as the son."

Lucidor followed his companion wherever he led, up hill and down dale. They both forgot about hunting, which held little promise in any case. They turned in at a farmhouse, where, warmly received, one of our friends refreshed himself with food, drink, and gossip, while the

other lost himself in thoughts and deliberations as to how he might turn the discovery he had made to his best advantage.

After all these stories and revelations, Lucidor had gained enough confidence in Antoni that he asked after him at once as he entered the courtyard, and he hurried into the gardens, where Antoni was supposed to be. He hastened along every path in the park in the serene evening sunlight—but in vain. Not a soul was to be seen. Finally he stepped through the door of the great hall, and strangely enough, the setting sun, reflected in the mirror, blinded him in such fashion that he did not recognize the two persons on the sofa, but could at least distinguish a woman receiving a passionate kiss on her hand from the man seated beside her. How great was his horror when his eyes recovered and he saw Lucinde and Antoni before him. He would have liked to sink into the ground, but stood rooted to the spot while Lucinde welcomed him in the friendliest, most unconstrained fashion, moved over, and asked him to sit at her right. In a daze he sat down and as she spoke to him, asking him about his day, excusing her absence on the ground of household obligations, he could hardly bear her voice. Antoni rose and took his leave of Lucinde, whereupon she, also rising, invited the other to join her for a walk. Walking beside her, he was silent and embarrassed. She, too, seemed uneasy; and had he been only slightly in possession of his senses, her deep breathing would have betrayed that she was at pains to conceal heartfelt sighs. Finally, as they approached the house, she took her leave, but he continued walking, first slowly, then impetuously, out toward the open country. The park hemmed him in; he hurried through the fields, aware only of the voice of his heart, without feeling for the beauties of this glorious evening. As soon as he was alone and his feelings could be vented in a soothing gush of tears, he cried out: "Several times in my life, but never so cruelly, have I suffered the pain which now makes me utterly wretched: when the most longed-for happiness finally takes us by the hand, opens its arms and simultaneously announces eternal parting. I sat with her, walked by her side; her dress brushed against me, and I had already lost her! Do not remind yourself, do not twist the knife in the wound; be silent and be firm."

He had forbidden himself further words. In silence he pushed on, deep in thought, through fields, meadows, and undergrowth, not always on the easiest paths. But when he finally returned late at night to his room, he contained himself no longer and exclaimed, "I shall be off tomorrow morning early. I will not go through another day like this!"

And so he threw himself, fully clothed, onto his bed. Ah, fortunate, healthy youth! He fell asleep instantly; the exhausting exercise of the day had earned him a sweet night's rest. The first rays of the sun, however, woke him from comforting morning dreams. It happened to

be the longest day of the year, which threatened to be all too long for him. As he had not been susceptible to the grace of the calming evening star, so, too, he felt the bracing beauty of the morning only to despair. To him, the world seemed as glorious as ever, for so it still was in his eyes. His inner being, however, denied it; all this no longer belonged to him, for he had lost Lucinde.

Chapter Nine

His portmanteau was soon packed; that he wanted to leave behind. He wrote no note. His absence from the dinner table, perhaps from supper as well, was to be explained in a few words by the groom, whom he had to wake in any case. But he found the groom already down by the stables, pacing up and down. "You do not wish to ride, I hope," exclaimed the usually good-natured fellow, with some irritation. "You won't mind my saying this, but the young master becomes more intolerable every day. Yesterday he was gadding about, so that one would think he might thank God for a rest on Sunday morning. But didn't he turn up this morning before daybreak, make a racket in the stables, and when I jumped out of bed, there he is, saddling and bridling your horse, and nothing I said could stop him. He swings himself up and calls out, 'Just think what a good deed I am doing. This creature does nothing but amble at a judicious trot. I'll spur him to a gallop with some life in it.' That was more or less what he said, among other extraordinary things."

Lucidor was doubly and triply upset; he loved the horse for the way it suited his own character, his own style of living. It annoyed him to think of the good, intelligent creature in reckless hands. His plan was ruined, his intention to flee in this crisis to an old university comrade, with whom he had enjoyed a happy, cordial friendship. His old sense of trust had reawakened, he did not count the miles that separated them, and he felt as though he were already receiving advice and comfort from this kindly and sagacious friend. This prospect was now cut off; yet not if he dared to reach his goal with his own two feet, which were still at his disposal.

He tried above all now to get out of the park into the open fields and to the road that would lead him to his friend. He was hesitating as to his direction, when he noticed to his left, rising above the shrubbery, the exotic structure of the hermitage, whose whereabouts had previously been kept secret from him. He also saw, to his great surprise, on the balcony under the pagoda roof, the good old man, who for several days had supposedly been ill, looking about him alertly. To

his friendly greeting and pressing invitation to come up, Lucidor responded with excuses and hurried gestures. Only sympathy for the good old man, who, hastening down the steep steps with unsteady tread, threatened to fall, could induce him to approach and then let himself be drawn into the house. With amazement he entered the charming little room; it had only three windows, with a lovely view over the countryside; the other walls were adorned, or rather covered, with hundreds of portraits, some of them engravings, some drawings, mounted on the wall in a particular order, and separated from each other by colorful borders and spaces.

"This is a favor, my friend, that I would not do for everyone; this is the sanctuary in which I cozily spend my declining days. Here I recuperate from all the errors into which society lures me. Here I bring my dietary indiscretions back into balance."

Lucidor examined the entire room, and, well versed in history himself, soon perceived that a historical inclination underlay the arrangement.

"Up here, in the frieze," the old man remarked, "you will find the names of outstanding men of ancient times, and then from more recent times, likewise only the names of famous people, for their actual appearance would be difficult to ascertain. Here, in the main section, however, my own lifetime begins; here are the men whom I heard mentioned while I was still a boy. For the names of outstanding men survive some fifty years in the memory of the people—after that the names vanish or become legendary.—Although my parents were German, I was born in Holland, and for me, William of Orange, as regent and king of England, remains the model of all extraordinary men and heroes.

"But here you see Louis XIV right beside him, who"—how gladly would Lucidor have interrupted the good old man, had it been proper for him to do, as it is for us telling the tale, for he was threatened by recent and most recent history, as could be deduced from the pictures of Frederick the Great and his generals, at which he glanced furtively. Even though the good youth respected the old man for his lively interest in his own times and those immediately preceding them, and even though certain individual traits and views could not but strike him as worthwhile, he himself had attended lectures on recent and most recent history at the academies, and what one has heard once, one thinks one knows forever. His mind was elsewhere; he heard nothing; he barely saw, and was about to slip through the door in most uncouth fashion and clatter down the long, perilous stairway, when a loud clapping was heard from below.

While Lucidor hesitated, the old man's head poked out the window, and a familiar voice sounded from below: "Come down, Sir, for heav-

en's sake, from your historical picture gallery! Put an end to your fasting and help me placate our young friend—when he learns what has happened. I have been a bit rough with Lucidor's horse; it has lost a shoe, and I had to leave it behind. What will he say? It's just too absurd when a person is absurd."

"Come up!" the old man said, and turned to Lucidor: "Well, what do you say?" Lucidor remained silent, and the wild squire entered. The back and forth resulted in a long scene; suffice it to say, they decided to send the groom out at once to see to the horse.

Leaving the old man behind, the two young people hastened to the house, to which Lucidor was not entirely reluctant to be drawn. Let happen what might, at least his heart's sole desire was enclosed within these walls. In such desperate straits, our free will in any case fails us, and we feel a momentary relief when some external force or necessity takes over. Nevertheless, he had a very odd sensation when he once more stepped into his room, as when someone is unwillingly constrained to return to a chamber at an inn he has already left, because he has broken an axle.

The merry squire busied himself with the portmanteau, very neatly unpacking it, taking care to lay out whatever articles of clothing he found which, although suitable for traveling, were more formal. He made Lucidor put on shoes and stockings, arranged his curly brown locks, and dressed him up smartly. Then, stepping back and surveying our friend and the result of his meddling from head to foot, he commented, "Now, my young friend, you look like someone who might lay claim to pretty girls, and serious enough at that to look around for a bride. Just one moment, and you shall see that I can make a good showing when the hour strikes. I picked that up from the officers, at whom the girls always cast sidelong glances, and have myself joined the ranks of a certain soldiery, and now they look at me, too, and then look again, because no one knows what to make of me. That kind of looking back and forth, amazement and attention, can often lead to something quite nice, which, even if it is not lasting, still merits a moment's attention."

"But come along now, my friend, and do me a similar service. When you see me slip into my costume, piece by piece, you will not deny this flighty lad cleverness and ingenuity."

He took his friend in tow through the long, rambling corridors of the old manor. "I have bedded down way in the rear," he explained. "Without wanting to hide, I prefer to be alone; for you can never do things to others' liking."

They passed the chancellery, just as a servant was coming out, carrying an old-fashioned writing set, black, large, and fully equipped; paper, too, was included.

"I know what they are going to be scribbling," the squire remarked. "Go along and leave me the key. Have a look inside, Lucidor. It will keep you amused till I get dressed. To a friend of the law a place like that is not so detestable as to a horseman!" and with these words he pushed Lucidor into the courtroom.

The youth immediately felt himself in a familiar, congenial element, surrounded by memories of the days when he, keen on his profession, had sat at just such a table, and practiced listening and writing. It was also not lost upon him that this was a handsome old private chapel, converted, with the change in religious practices, to the service of the goddess Themis. On the shelves he found headings and documents that were already familiar; he had himself worked on these cases back in the capital. Opening a file, he found a document which he himself had copied, another which he himself had authored. The writing and the paper, the official seal and the presiding judge's signature, all recalled that period of honest striving and youthful hopes. And when he looked around and saw the bailiff's seat, which had been reserved and promised to him, such a fine position, such a worthy sphere of endeavor, which he was in danger of scorning and renouncing, the entire situation distressed him doubly and triply, while at the same time the figure of Lucinde seemed to recede from him.

He wanted to go outside, but found himself imprisoned. His peculiar friend had, out of either carelessness or mischief, locked the door after himself. Our friend did not long remain in this painful oppression, however, for the other returned, apologized and put him into genuine good humor through his odd appearance. A certain audacity in the colors and cut of his clothing was moderated by his natural taste; similarly we cannot withhold a certain admiration even from tattooed Indians. "Today," he exclaimed, "will compensate us for the tedium of the past few days. Good friends, merry friends, have arrived, pretty girls, roguish, amorous creatures, and then my father, and, wonder of wonders, your father as well! What a party it will be! Everyone is already gathered in the hall for breakfast."

Lucidor suddenly felt as though he were peering into a dense fog; all the familiar and unfamiliar new arrivals appeared to him as so many ghosts. But his character, in conjunction with his pure heart, sustained him, and in a few seconds he was ready for anything. He followed his hastening friend with firm tread, resolved to be patient, whatever might happen, and to declare himself, whatever might result.

Nevertheless he was taken aback as he crossed the threshold. In the large semicircle around the windows he at once spied his father, next to the bailiff, both splendidly dressed. The sisters, Antoni, and various other figures, known and unknown to him, he took in with a single glance, which threatened to become clouded. Faltering, he approached

his father, who greeted him in the friendliest fashion, although with a certain formality, which was hardly conducive to intimate confessions. Standing there before so many people, he looked about for a suitable place; he could have stood next to Lucinde, but Julie, disliking stiff propriety, turned toward him, so that he was obliged to go to her; Antoni remained next to Lucinde.

At this critical moment Lucidor once more felt as if charged with a commission and, falling back on his entire legal training, called upon that fine maxim for his own benefit: "We should conduct the affairs entrusted to us by strangers as though they were our own; why not, then, conduct our own affairs in the same spirit?"—Practiced as he was in public speaking, he quickly ran through what he had to say. In the meanwhile the company, arranging itself in a formal semicircle, seemed to be outflanking him. He knew indeed the content of his speech, but could not think how to begin. Then he noticed, set out on a table in the corner, the great inkwell, with some notaries by it. The bailiff made a movement indicating that he was about to speak. Lucidor wanted to forestall him, and at that very moment Julie squeezed his hand. This completely destroyed his composure; he concluded that everything had been decided and that he was utterly lost.

Now it was no longer a matter of respecting existing circumstances, family ties, social custom, or etiquette. He stared straight ahead, pulled his hand from Julie's, and was out of the door so quickly that he was gone without anyone's realizing quite how, and once outside, he himself hardly knew where he was.

Shy of the sunlight, which blazed down upon him with full force, avoiding the gaze of those he encountered, fearful of those who might come looking for him, he walked on and reached the pavilion. There his knees threatened to give way. He stumbled inside and threw himself down disconsolately on the sofa beneath the mirror. To be overcome in the midst of a proper, well-bred company by such confusion, which still beat back and forth inside him like a wave! His past existence warred with the present. It was a dreadful moment.

And thus he lay for a time, his face buried in the cushion on which yesterday Lucinde had rested her arm. Still absorbed in his pain, he suddenly sprang up, feeling someone's touch, yet not having sensed the approach of any other person: there he saw Lucinde, who stood close by him.

Assuming she had been sent to bring him back, that she had been commissioned to lead him back with tactful, sisterly words to the company, to face his horrid fate, he exclaimed, "They should not have sent you, Lucinde, for you are the one who drove me away from there; I will not return! If you are capable of any pity, provide me with the opportunity and the means to flee. And, that you may testify why it

was impossible to bring me back, accept this key to my conduct, which must strike you and everyone else as mad. Hear the pledge I made to myself and which I now repeat aloud irrevocably: with you alone do I wish to live, to use and enjoy the years of my youth and likewise a loyal, upright old age. Let this be as firm and sure as anything ever spoken at the altar, what I now swear as I leave you, I, the person most to be pitied on this earth."

He made a movement as if to slip by her, who stood so close in front of him, but she caught him gently in her arms. "What are you doing?" he cried. "Lucidor!" she exclaimed, "You are not to be pitied, as you imagine. You are mine, I am yours; I hold you in my arms; do not hesitate to put yours around me. Your father has agreed. Antoni is to marry my sister." He drew back from her in astonishment. "Could that be true?" Lucinde smiled and nodded, and he freed himself from her embrace. "Let me see at a distance once more what will be so near to me, what will belong to me most nearly." He took her hands, their eyes met. "Lucinde, are you mine?" She replied, "Yes, I am," with the sweetest tears in the truest of eyes. He embraced her and pressed his head to her shoulder, clinging like a shipwrecked man to a cliff; the ground was still heaving beneath him. But his entranced eyes, opening again, now fell upon the mirror. There he saw her in his arms, himself entwined by hers; he gazed again and again. Such feelings remain with a person for his entire life. At the same time, the mirror showed him the landscape, which yesterday had looked so dreary and ominous to him, now more brilliant and wonderful than ever, and himself in such a state, with such a background! Sufficient recompense for all his suffering.

"We are not alone," Lucinde remarked, and hardly had he recovered from his ecstasy than girls in finery, wearing wreaths, and boys carrying garlands appeared, blocking the doorway to the garden house. "It was all supposed to work out differently," Lucinde exclaimed. "We had everything so delightfully planned, and now everything is in chaos!"

A lively march sounded in the distance, and the company could be seen approaching the pavilion in gay and festive procession by way of the main avenue. He hesitated to go out to meet them, and seemed sure of his steps only when she held his arm. She stayed by his side, awaiting from moment to moment the solemn scene of reunion and of thanks for the forgiveness that had already been granted.

But it had been otherwise disposed by the willful gods: the cheerful blare of a postilion's horn, from the opposite direction, seemed to throw the whole arrangement into confusion. "Who could be coming?" Lucinde cried. Lucidor shuddered at the thought of a stranger's presence, and indeed the carriage seemed completely unfamiliar. It was a new two-seater in the very latest style! It drove right up to the pavilion.

A fine, well-mannered boy sprang down from the back and opened the door, but no one stepped out; the carriage was empty. The boy climbed in and with practiced hand threw back the hood. In a twinkling the most charming conveyance for gay pleasure trips stood ready, before the eyes of all those who had in the meantime reached the pavilion. Antoni, hurrying on ahead of the others, led Julie to the carriage. "Try it," he said, "and see whether this conveyance pleases you for traveling with me through the wide world on the best of its roads; I shall take you on no others. And should it be necessary, we will know how to improvise. Packhorses will carry us over the mountains, and the carriage as well."

"You are a dear," Julie exclaimed. The boy came forward and with a conjurer's dexterity demonstrated all the comforts, little luxuries, and conveniences of the light vehicle.

"There is no way on earth to thank you," Julie cried. "Only in this small mobile heaven, from this cloud into which you raise me, will I give you my hearty thanks." She had already leaped into the carriage, casting him a friendly kiss and glance. "For the moment you may not yet join me here, but there is someone else whom I intend to take along on this trial drive; he still has another trial to undergo." She summoned Lucidor, who, engaged in a conversation with his father and his father-in-law in which he had no voice, was glad to be forced into the carriage, since he felt an inescapable need to distract himself in some way, if only for just a moment. He sat down beside her, she told the postilion which way to go. Swiftly they rode off, enveloped in dust, out of sight of the astonished spectators.

Julie settled herself firmly and comfortably in one corner. "You take the other, dear brother-in-law, so that we can comfortably look into each other's eyes."

LUCIDOR. You sense my confusion, my embarrassment. I am still as in a dream. Help me out of it.

JULIE. Look at the fine peasants, how warmly they greet us. But during your visit you have not been in the upper village. All prosperous folk, who are all well disposed toward me. Not one is so rich that one cannot, now and then, do him a significant favor. This road, on which we are traveling so comfortably, was laid out by my father, as were these other excellent arrangements.

LUCIDOR. I can well believe that, and admit as much. But what have these extraneous matters to do with my inner confusion?

JULIE. Be patient, and I will show you the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Now we are on top. How clearly the level land is set off against the mountains! All of these villages have much to thank my father for, and probably my mother and us daughters as

well. The commons of that little town, way over there, mark the boundaries of our holdings.

LUCIDOR. I find you in a very strange mood. You do not seem to be saying exactly what you would wish to say.

JULIE. Now look down here to your left; what a lovely composition that makes! The church with its tall linden trees, the bailiff's house with its poplars behind the village hill. We can also see the gardens from here, and the park.

The postilion was driving faster now.

JULIE. You recognize that pavilion; it looks as splendid from here as the surrounding countryside does from there. We shall stop here by the tree. From here we are reflected above in the great mirror, so that they can see us perfectly well from there, but we cannot see ourselves.—Drive on!—Not long ago a couple saw itself reflected in that mirror, and, if I am not greatly mistaken, with great mutual satisfaction.

Lucidor, irritated, made no reply; they drove on awhile in silence, the carriage whipping along. "Here," said Julie, "is where the bad road begins. There is a future good deed for you. Before we start down, look over there again, where the glorious crown of my mother's beech towers over everything. You will drive back by the bad road," she continued to the coachman; "we will take the footpath through the valley, and will be there before you." As she got out she said, "You must admit that the wandering Jew, that Anton Rover, knows how to make his pilgrimages comfortable enough, for himself and his companions; it is a very beautiful, comfortable carriage."

She was already down the hill; Lucidor followed, lost in thought, and found her seated on a well-placed bench; it was Lucinde's favorite spot. She summoned him to her side.

JULIE. Now we sit here, and are nothing to one another, since that was how it was to be. Little Quicksilver was not to your liking. You could not love such a creature; she was hateful to you.

Lucidor's astonishment increased.

JULIE. Ah, but Lucinde! She is the essence of all perfection, and the pretty little sister was once and for all out of the question. I see the question trembling on your lips: who informed us so accurately?

LUCIDOR. There is some treason here!

JULIE. Oh yes, there is a traitor involved.

LUCIDOR. Name him!

JULIE. He is quickly unmasked. You yourself!—You have the commendable or uncommendable habit of talking to yourself, and I will confess to you, in the name of all of us, that we took turns eavesdropping.

LUCIDOR (jumping up). A fine sort of hospitality, to lay traps for strangers this way!

JULIE. By no means. We never thought of eavesdropping on you, any more than on anyone else. You know, your bed stands in an alcove in the wall; on the other side is another ordinarily used for storage. A few days before, we had made our elderly friend sleep there, because we were worried about him in his isolated hermitage. Then your very first evening you launched into such a passionate soliloquy, whose contents he revealed to us most urgently the following morning.

Lucidor had no desire to interrupt her. He moved away.

JULIE (standing up and following him). How useful this disclosure was! I will readily admit that though you were not exactly repugnant to me, the situation that awaited me was by no means desirable. To be Madame Bailiff, what a dreadful fate! To have a capable, good husband, who is to administer justice to people and is so preoccupied with justice that he cannot manage to be just! Who cannot do justice either to those above or to those below and, what is worst, cannot do justice to himself! I know what my mother suffered from the incorruptible, unbending nature of my father. Finally, alas after her death, a certain mildness developed in him; he seemed to feel more at one with the world, to adapt somewhat to its ways, which in the past he had always opposed in vain.

LUCIDOR (highly dissatisfied with the situation, provoked by the frivolous treatment, stood still). For an evening's jest it might have been all right, but to perpetrate such a humiliating mystification on an unsuspecting guest for days on end is not pardonable.

JULIE. We all shared the blame; we all eavesdropped on you. Yet I alone am atoning for the guilt of listening.

LUCIDOR. All of you! All the more unpardonable! And how could you look at me by day without shame, when you had ignominiously and illicitly duped me by night? But now it is absolutely clear to me that your arrangements by day were intended only to make a fool of me. A fine family! And what happened to your father's love of justice?—And Lucinde!—

JULIE. And Lucinde!—What sort of tone is this? You mean to say, do you not, how painful it is to think evil of Lucinde, to have to put Lucinde in the same class as the rest of us?

LUCIDOR. I do not comprehend Lucinde.

JULIE. You mean to say: that this pure and noble soul, this calm, tranquil nature, goodness and kindness itself, this woman just as she ought to be, should join forces with a thoughtless company, with a madcap sister, a spoiled brother, and certain other mysterious persons: that surpasses understanding.

LUCIDOR. Yes, that surpasses understanding.

JULIE. Well, try to understand it! Like all of us, Lucinde had her hands tied. Had you been able to see her embarrassment, how she barely kept herself from revealing all to you, you would love her doubly and triply, if every true love were not already ten- and hundredfold. Let me also assure you: toward the end, the game became too long for us all.

LUCIDOR. Then why did not you put an end to it?

JULIE. That, too, can now be explained. After our father had heard about your first monologue and saw that all his children had no objection to such a switch, he decided to go to your father right away. The importance of the matter weighed on him. Only a father can truly feel what respect is owed to a father. "He must be informed first," my father said, "so that he shall not be compelled afterwards, when the rest of us are all agreed, to give an annoyed consent. I know him perfectly; I know how he clings to an idea, a preference, a project, and that worries me. He has thought so long about Julie in connection with his maps and drawings that he has already resolved to transfer everything here, when the day should come for the young pair to settle here and be unlikely to move. He wanted to devote all his vacations to us, as well as whatever other kindness and goodness he had in mind. He must learn what kind of joke Nature has played on us, before anything is actually declared or decided." He then made us all promise with a solemn handshake to watch you and prevent you from doing anything, no matter what. How his return was delayed, how much art, effort, and tenacity it took to win your father's consent, that you may hear from him. Enough, the matter is settled; Lucinde is yours.

And thus the two of them, moving briskly from where they had first been seated, talking as they went, pausing along the way, still talking, then strolling on, passed through the meadows and came to the hillock, where they reached another well laid roadway. The carriage came swiftly toward them. At this point Julie called her neighbor's attention to a strange spectacle. All the machinery of which her brother had been so proud was occupied and in motion; the wheels were transporting a crowd of people up and down; the swings were flying to and fro, and people were climbing the poles. What bold swings and leaps one saw above the heads of an enormous throng! The squire had set it all in motion so that the guests might be entertained after dinner. "Drive on through the lower village," Julie called. "The people wish me well and they must see how well it goes with me!"

The village was deserted, for the young people had already hurried to the amusement area. Old men and women appeared at doors and windows, roused by the posthorn. They all waved, blessed her, and cried, "Look at the handsome couple!"

JULIE. Well, there you have it! We would have been well suited after all; you may yet be sorry.

LUCIDOR. But as it is, dear sister-in-law!

JULIE. "Dear" now, when you are free of me, isn't that so?

LUCIDOR. Just one word! A heavy responsibility rests on you; why did you squeeze my hand, when you knew and felt my terrifying plight? Nothing in my life has ever seemed so thoroughly malicious.

JULIE. Thank the Lord, now everything is atoned for, everything is forgiven. I did not want you, that is true, but that you did not want me in the slightest, that is something no girl forgives, and that squeeze—mark this well—was for calling me a rogue. I admit it was more roguish than was proper, and I can forgive myself only by forgiving you, and so let everything be forgiven and forgotten! Here is my hand on it.

He clasped it, and said, "So here we are again! Once more in our park, and you will soon set off, around the wide world, and doubtless back again. We shall meet again."

They had reached the garden pavilion; it seemed empty; the company, discomfited by the long delay of dinner, had gone for a walk. But Antoni and Lucinde emerged. Julie sprang out of the carriage toward her betrothed, thanking him with a warm embrace, and wept for joy. A flush appeared on the cheeks of the worthy man, his features relaxed, his eye grew moist, and a handsome, distinguished youth emerged from his husk.

And so the two couples joined the party, with emotions beyond the loveliest dream.

Chapter Ten

Father and son, accompanied by a groom, had passed through a stretch of pleasant country, when the groom halted in view of a high wall that seemed to enclose a large area. He signified that they should now approach the great gate on foot, because no horse was allowed within these precincts. They pulled at the bell, the gate swung open without any human form becoming visible, and they set out toward an old building that gleamed from among ancient trunks of beeches and oaks. It was a remarkable sight, for although it seemed old from the style, it looked as if the masons and stonecutters had only just left the site, so fresh, complete, and crisp did the joints appear, as well as all the worked stone ornament.

The heavy metal ring on the handsomely carved front door invited them to knock, which Felix mischievously accomplished rather ungently. This door, too, sprang open and they discovered in the hall a

woman in her middle years, occupied at her embroidery frame with a handsome piece of work. She greeted the newcomers at once as though they had been expected and began to sing a cheerful song, at which another woman emerged from a door nearby. What dangled from her belt identified her at once as the busy housekeeper and châteline. She too greeted the strangers in a friendly manner, led them up a staircase and showed them into a solemn hall; it was broad and lofty, with wainscoting all around, surmounted by a series of historical scenes. Two persons came toward them, a younger woman and an older man.

The woman at once welcomed the guest frankly. "You have been announced as one of us. But how shall I introduce this gentleman here in few words? He is the friend of the family in the finest and broadest sense, by day instructive company, by night astronomer, and at all times physician."

"And I," the man replied cordially, "commend this lady to you as tirelessly industrious by day, immediately at hand when needed by night, always the most cheerful companion."

Angela, for that was the name of this woman so beautiful in both body and spirit, now announced the arrival of Makarie. A green curtain rose, and an elderly, hallowed figure in an armchair was pushed in by two pretty young girls, while two others wheeled in a round table set with a welcome breakfast. Cushions were laid in a corner on the massive oak benches that ran all around the room, and the other three seated themselves here, with Makarie in her chair across from them. Felix consumed his breakfast standing, roaming around the room and studying with curiosity the knightly scenes above the wainscoting.

Makarie spoke to Wilhelm as to an intimate. She seemed to enjoy giving telling descriptions of her relations. It was as though she penetrated the inner nature of each through the individual mask covering him. Those with whom Wilhelm was acquainted stood before him as if transfigured: the benevolent insight of this inestimable woman had detached the outer husk and ennobled and revived the healthy kernel.

After these pleasant topics had been exhausted in the friendliest fashion, she said to the worthy companion, "You shall not make the presence of this new friend another pretext for deferring our promised discussion; he seems of the sort who might well participate in it."

But he replied, "You know how difficult it is to explain oneself in these matters, for the subject is nothing less than the misuse of excellent and widely applicable means."

"I agree," Makarie answered, "because you face a dilemma. If you talk about misuse, then you seem to impugn the dignity of the means themselves, since the means are always still implicit in their misuse; if you talk about means, then you can scarcely concede the possibility

that their thoroughness and dignity might allow any misuse. However, since we are among ourselves and are not attempting to establish anything definitive or affect the outside world, but only to clarify things for ourselves, the discussion can still proceed."

"Yet we ought first to ask," replied the cautious old man, "whether our new friend even wishes to delve into a fairly abstruse matter, or whether he would not prefer to retire to his room for some needed rest. Could he enter with any enthusiasm into this topic of ours without any context or knowledge of how we came to it?"

"If I may explain to myself what you said through an analogy, then it seems rather like the case in which one attacks hypocrisy and can be accused of attacking religion itself."

"We may let the analogy stand," he replied, "for we are dealing with a combination of several important persons, a lofty science, significant art, and, to be brief, mathematics itself."

"I have always," Wilhelm answered, "even when listening to discussions of very unfamiliar subjects, been able to come away with something. After all, everything that interests one person will evoke some response in another."

"Assuming," the other replied, "that he has acquired a certain liberality of mind; and since we credit you with that, I for my part shall make no objection to your remaining."

"But what shall we do about Felix?" asked Makarie, "who, as I see, has already finished looking at the pictures and shows some signs of impatience."

"Allow me to say something privately to this lady," replied Felix, and whispered something to Angela, who then departed with him, but soon returned smiling, while the friend of the household began to speak as follows:

"When it comes to expressing criticism, finding fault, or even airing doubt, I do not willingly take the initiative; I look for some authority and take comfort in the knowledge that someone stands beside me. I praise without scruple, for why should I keep quiet when something appeals to me? Even if it reveals my limitations, I have nothing to be ashamed of. But if I criticize, it may happen that I reject something excellent and thus invite the disapproval of others who understand it better. Then I have to retract, once I have been enlightened. For this reason I have brought with me several texts, even translations, for in such questions I trust my nation as little as I do myself. Concurrence from afar and abroad gives me greater certainty." After receiving permission, he began to read as follows:

If, however, we find ourselves disinclined to let the worthy man read, our patrons will most likely be pleased, since what was said earlier against Wilhelm's presence at the conversation applies even more to

the situation in which we find ourselves. Our friends have taken a novel into their hands, and if it has already been more didactic here and there than it should be, we find it advisable not to put the patience of our well-wishers further to the test. We intend to have the papers at our disposal printed elsewhere, and shall proceed with our history without further ado, since we ourselves are impatient to see the riddle before us finally explained.

Nevertheless we cannot forbear to mention a few more things that were said before this noble gathering dispersed for the evening. Wilhelm, who had listened attentively to the reading, spoke up very directly: "I have been hearing tell of great natural talents, abilities, and skills, and yet also of reservations about their application. If I were to sum up about it, I would exclaim: great ideas and a pure heart—that is what we should pray for from God!"

Applauding these sensible words, the gathering dispersed; the astronomer, however, promised to let Wilhelm enjoy fully the wonders of the starry heavens on this splendid clear night.

A few hours later the astronomer had his guest wind his way up the staircase to the observatory. He emerged alone on the bare platform at the top of a high round tower. A most serene night, with all the stars shining and twinkling, surrounded the observer, who thought he beheld the great dome of the heavens for the first time in all its glory. In ordinary life, quite apart from the unfavorable weather, which so often conceals from us the brilliant realm of the ether, our view of the sky is blocked at home by roofs and gables, on the road by forests and cliffs, but most of all, wherever we are, by the inner disturbances of the spirit which, obscuring our surroundings more than fog and bad weather, pull us hither and yon.

Overwhelmed and amazed, he covered both eyes. The colossal ceases to be sublime; it exceeds our power to understand, it threatens to annihilate us. "What am I in the face of the universe?" he asked his spirit. "How can I stand before it, stand in its very midst?" Upon brief reflection, however, he continued, "The result of our evening's discussion also solves the riddle of the present moment. How can man confront the infinite except by gathering all his spiritual forces, which are drawn in all directions, into the innermost, deepest part of his being, by asking himself: 'Have you the right even to imagine yourself in the midst of this eternally living order if there does not immediately manifest itself inside you something in continuous motion, revolving around a pure center? And even if it would be difficult for you to find this center in your own breast, you would recognize it because a benevolent, beneficent effect emanates from it and testifies to its existence.'

"But who should, who can, regard his past life without becoming somewhat confused, for he will usually discover that his intentions were good, his actions wrong, his demands blameworthy, and his achievement nevertheless desirable.

"How often have you not seen these stars shine, and have they not each time found you a different man? But they are always the same and say always the same thing: 'We mark,' they repeat, 'by our orderly progression the day and the hour.' And this time I can reply: 'In the present circumstances I have no cause for shame. My purpose is to bring all the members of a noble family properly together again. My way is marked out. I am to investigate what keeps noble souls apart, and remove barriers, of whatever sort they may be.' This is what you may safely declare to these heavenly hosts; if they noticed you, they would doubtless smile at your limitations, but they would surely respect your intention and favor its fulfillment."

With these words or thoughts he turned to look about him, and caught sight of Jupiter, the planet of good fortune, shining as magnificently as ever. He took this as a favorable omen and continued to gaze joyfully for some time.

Immediately afterwards the astronomer summoned him to come down and let him look at this very planet through a telescope, significantly enlarged and accompanied by its moons, as a wonder of the heavens.

After our friend had remained absorbed for a long time, he turned to the stargazer and spoke: "I do not know whether I should thank you for bringing this star so very much nearer to me. When I saw it before, it stood in its proper relationship to all the other countless bodies of the heavens and to myself. But now it stands out disproportionately in my imagination, and I do not know whether I should want to bring the remaining hosts closer in the same fashion. They would crowd me, make me anxious."

Our friend continued in this vein, as was his custom, and in this context many unexpected things were discussed. Upon some response from the expert, Wilhelm replied, "I understand very well that for you stargazers it must be the greatest joy gradually to draw the immense universe as close as I have just seen and still see this planet. But allow me to say: I have discovered in life, altogether and on average, that these aids with which we enhance our senses have no favorable moral effect. Someone who sees through spectacles considers himself cleverer than he is, because his external senses have been thrown out of balance with his inner judgment; it requires a higher degree of cultivation, of which only superior people are capable, to balance to some degree their inner sense, the truth, with this false image drawn closer from outside. Whenever I look through spectacles, I am another person and

do not like myself; I see more than I ought to see, and the sharper images of the world do not harmonize with my internal ones. I quickly put aside the glasses as soon as I have satisfied my curiosity about how this or that distant object is constituted."

In response to several joking comments of the astronomer's, Wilhelm continued, "We can as little ban these glasses from the world as we can machinery. But to the observer of morals, it is important to find out and to know how various things we deplore in humanity have crept in. Thus, for example, I am convinced that the custom of wearing spectacles is largely responsible for the arrogance of our young people."

During these conversations the night had far advanced, and the older man, himself accustomed to such vigils, suggested to his young friend that he lie down on the cot and sleep for a while, so that he might observe and greet Venus with fresher eye just before sunrise, for she was to display her full brilliance on this particular morning.

At this suggestion of the kindly, considerate man, Wilhelm, who to this moment had remained fully alert and awake, realized that he was truly exhausted. He lay down and in a moment had sunk into the deepest slumber. Awakened by the stargazer, Wilhelm jumped up and hurried to the window; there he stared in amazement for a moment, then exclaimed in rapture, "What magnificence! What a miracle!" Other words of delight followed, but the sight remained for him still a miracle, a great miracle.

"I could have predicted that this lovely star, which appears today in singular fullness and splendor, would come as a surprise to you, but I may well say, without being accused of coldness, that I see no miracle, no miracle at all."

"And how could you?" replied Wilhelm, "since I bring it along, since I carry it within me, since I do not know what is happening to me. Let me keep looking, dumbstruck and amazed, then you shall hear." After a pause he went on, "I was lying in a gentle but deep sleep, and found myself in yesterday's hall, but alone. The green curtain rose, Makarie's chair moved forward by itself, as if it were an animate being. It shone like gold, her clothing seemed priestly, a soft light radiated from her. I was about to prostrate myself. Then clouds billowed out around her feet, and rising, bore the sacred figure upward, as if they were wings. Finally I saw amidst the parting clouds, in place of her glorious countenance, a star twinkling, which was steadily carried aloft, and through the opened vault of the ceiling joined the entire starry sky, which seemed to keep spreading and encompassing everything. At that moment you wake me; drunk with sleep, I stagger to the window, the star still vividly in my eyes, and as I look out—there is the morning star, of equal beauty though perhaps not of equal shining splendor, truly before me! This real star, floating up there, takes the

place of the dreamed one; it consumes the glory of the vision, yet still I gaze on and on, and you gaze with me, at what should actually have vanished from before my eyes together with the mist of sleep."

"A miracle, yes, a miracle!" the astronomer cried. "You do not know yourself what wondrous things you have spoken. But may this not foretell the departure of that glorious woman, to whom sooner or later such an apotheosis is destined."

The next morning Wilhelm hastened to find his Felix, who had slipped away early while all was still. Wilhelm came to the garden, which, to his astonishment, was being tended by a number of girls. All, if not pretty, were at least not homely, and not one seemed to have reached the age of twenty. They wore the costumes of their different villages, and they kept busy, greeting him cheerfully and continuing with their tasks.

He there encountered Angela, who was going about assigning the work and supervising. The guest expressed his astonishment at so pretty and bustling a colony. "This," she replied, "does not die out; it changes, but remains always the same. For in their twentieth year these girls, like all the girls in our establishment, leave us to enter active life, mostly to be married. All the young men in the neighborhood who want a stout helpmate pay attention to what is going on here. Moreover, we do not keep our pupils locked up; they have already looked about at various county fairs and have been seen, chosen, and betrothed. And so there are several families waiting to see when we have room, in order to place their daughters here." After this matter had been discussed, the guest could not conceal from his new friend his wish to look through again what had been read aloud the previous evening. "I grasped the main points of the discussion," he said, "but now I should like to become better acquainted with the specifics of the matter."

"Fortunately," she replied, "I am in a position to satisfy this desire at once. The intimacy with our innermost concerns that you were so quickly vouchsafed justifies me in telling you that those papers are already in my hands and are carefully preserved with other papers. My mistress," she continued, "is thoroughly convinced of the importance of spontaneous discussion. There passes before us, she says, what can be found in no book, and then again the best that books have ever contained. Therefore she has made it my duty to record individual good ideas that spring from an intelligent conversation, like seeds from a plant with many branches. 'Only if we can faithfully capture the present,' she says, 'can we truly appreciate what has come down to us, since we find there the finest thought already articulated, the most beautiful feeling already expressed. We come thus to contemplate the universal harmony to which man is summoned, to which he must

often accede against his own will, since he is only too prone to imagine that the world began anew with himself.' ”

Angela went on to confide to her guest that a significant archive had been assembled in this way, and that she sometimes read from it to Makarie on sleepless nights. On such occasions, remarkably enough, thousands of particular insights would spring forth, as when a glob of quicksilver falls and splits in all directions into the most various and innumerable droplets.

To his question about the extent to which this archive was kept secret, she revealed that, to be sure, only their closest circle knew of it, but that she would take the responsibility and, since he displayed interest, show him at once some of the notebooks.

During this conversation in the gardens they had reached the castle, and, entering the rooms in one of the wings, she said with a smile, “Since we are here, I have another secret to confide to you, for which you are not in the slightest prepared.” She let him look through a curtain into an alcove, where he saw, with great astonishment, to be sure, his Felix sitting at a table and writing. At first he was unable to make sense of this unexpected industry, but he soon understood, when Angela revealed that Felix had disappeared the previous day for this purpose, declaring that writing and riding were his sole desire.

Our friend was then shown into a room, where he could see many well-ordered papers in the cabinets lining the walls. Labels of various sorts indicated the most diverse contents; everything radiated discernment and order. When Wilhelm praised these qualities, Angela attributed the entire merit to the friend of the household; he supervised with remarkable keenness not only the general scheme but in difficult cases the particular classification as well. Then she located the manuscripts of the previous evening and permitted our avid friend to make use of them, as well as of everything else, and not only to read the material but to copy it as well.

In this respect our friend had to hold back, for there was only too much he thought intriguing and worth having. He found the notebooks with brief, almost unconnected sentences particularly valuable. These were conclusions which, if we did not know what occasioned them, would seem paradoxical, but which make us go backwards, by a process of reversed intuition or invention, to reconstruct as best we can the filiation of such ideas from the bottom up.

Once again, we cannot allot space here for such matters, for the reasons alluded to above. Nevertheless we will not fail to take the first opportunity to present a selection from these acquired insights in a suitable place.

On the morning of the third day, our friend betook himself to Angela and stood before her, not without some embarrassment. “Today I am

to leave," he said, "and should receive my final instructions from that admirable woman whom, unfortunately, I was not permitted to see all day yesterday. But there is something weighing on my heart, on my entire inner being, which I should like to have clarified. If it is possible, do me this kindness."

"I believe I understand you," Angela replied agreeably, "but go on."

"A wondrous dream," he continued, "some solemn words of the stargazer's, a separate, locked drawer in the cabinets, labeled 'Makarie's Particularities'—these suggestive elements join with an inner voice that tells me the study of those heavenly lights is not merely a scientific pastime, a striving to know the universe; rather one may suspect there lies hidden here a very special relationship between Makarie and the stars, one it would be most important for me to comprehend. I am neither curious nor prying, but this is such a significant case for the inquirer into things of the mind and spirit that I cannot forbear to ask whether, in addition to all that has been entrusted to me, this extra measure may not be vouchsafed as well."

"I am authorized to grant you this," the agreeable Angela replied. "To be sure, your remarkable dream has remained secret from Makarie, but the astronomer and I have contemplated and considered your strange spiritual intervention, your unexpected comprehension of our deepest mysteries, and we feel confident that we should lead you further. But let me speak first in similitudes. Where things are difficult to comprehend, one does well to help oneself this way.

"It is said of the poet that the elements of the visible world are buried in the depths of his nature, and have only to unfold gradually from within. Hence nothing in the world may come before his eyes that he has not already experienced intuitively. In the same way, it would seem, the conditions in our solar system existed within Makarie, completely innate from the beginning, at first dormant, then gradually developing, becoming increasingly clear. At first she suffered from these visions, but then she took pleasure in them, and with the years, her delight grew. However, she did not come to terms with them and achieve serenity until she had found support, the friend with whose merits you have already become well acquainted.

"As a mathematician and philosopher he was skeptical by nature, so for a long time he doubted whether her knowledge might not have been acquired. For Makarie had to admit that she had had the benefit of instruction in astronomy at an early age and had pursued it passionately. But she also reported to him that for many years she had compared these inner visions with her external observations, but could never bring them into agreement.

"The scientist then had her describe minutely what she saw, which was only occasionally very clear. He made calculations and concluded

from them that she not only carried the entire solar system within her, but also that she moved within it spiritually as an integral part. He proceeded according to this hypothesis, and his calculations were confirmed in an incredible manner by her statements.

"For the moment, this is all I may confide to you, and I do so with the urgent plea that you not say a word of it to anyone. For would not every person of sense and reason, however well intentioned, take such statements to be phantasies, imperfectly understood recollections of previously acquired knowledge? Even the family knows none of these details; indeed these private sightings, these entrancing visions, are what passes with her relatives for an illness that temporarily prevents her from taking part in the world and its interests. Preserve all of this in silence, my friend, and let even Lenardo notice nothing."

Toward evening our traveler was again presented to Makarie. Much that was edifying was broached in a pleasant fashion, from which we select the following:

"By nature we possess no faults that could not become virtues, no virtues that might not become faults. The latter are the most disturbing. I am led to this consideration by my remarkable nephew, that young man of whom you have heard such strange tales in the family, and whom I, as my family asserts, treat more tolerantly and lovingly than is proper.

"From his youth he manifested a certain lively technical ability, to which he devoted himself entirely and which he successfully developed into considerable knowledge and mastery. Later on, everything that he sent back from his travels was always the most intricate, the cleverest, the finest, the most delicate of workmanship, indicative of the country where he happened to be and whose identity we were supposed to guess. From this one might surmise that he is and will remain a dry, detached person, preoccupied with externalities. In conversation, too, he was not given to joining in general moral observations. Yet he secretly and quietly possessed such a remarkably fine, pragmatic sense of good and evil, of what is praiseworthy and what is not, that I never saw him err toward either old or young, high or low. But this inborn conscientiousness, unregulated as it was, developed in certain cases into a capricious weakness; he was driven to discover obligations for himself where none existed, and would sometimes needlessly take blame upon himself.

"From the style of his travels, but especially from the preparations for his return, I believe that he thinks he once injured some woman in our circle, that her fate now worries him, and that he will feel free and absolved only when he learns that all is well with her. Angela will discuss the rest with you. Take this letter and prepare a happy reunion

for our family. To speak frankly, I wish to see him once more upon this earth, and give him my heartfelt blessing as I depart."

Chapter Eleven

The Nut-brown Maid

After Wilhelm had transmitted his message accurately and in detail, Lenardo replied with a smile, "I am greatly indebted to you for what you have told me, yet I must still ask another question. Did not my aunt, at the end, ask you to report an apparently insignificant matter to me?" The other reflected for a moment. "Yes," he answered, "Now I recall. She made mention of a young woman whom she called Valerine. I was supposed to tell you that she is happily married and finds herself in enviable circumstances."

"You lift a stone from my heart," answered Lenardo. "Now I am glad to go home, because I need not fear that the memory of this girl will be a reproach to me once there."

"It would not be proper for me to ask what kind of relationship you had with her," said Wilhelm. "Enough, you may be at peace, if you are concerned at all in her fate."

"It is the strangest relationship in the world," Lenardo said, "in no way a love relationship, as one might think. I may trust you and tell you what is actually no story at all. But what must you think, when I tell you that my hesitant return, that my fear of coming home, that these peculiar arrangements and questions as to how things stood in our family, actually had this single purpose: to learn indirectly how things stood with this girl.

"For believe me," he continued, "I am well aware that you can leave people you know for a considerable time without finding them changed, and so I expect I shall soon feel quite at home among my family. My worry was for this single person, whose condition had to change, and has, thank heaven, changed for the better."

"You make me curious," said Wilhelm. "You lead me to expect something most unusual."

"I, at any rate, consider it so," replied Lenardo, and began his tale as follows:

"I had had the firm intention, cherished from boyhood, of making the traditional tour through civilized Europe while still a youth, but, as often happens, the execution of this plan was delayed time and time again. My immediate surroundings beguiled me, held me fast, and

distant things lost more and more of their attraction, the more I read or heard about them. But finally, spurred by my uncle, enticed by friends, who had gone out into the world before me, the decision was taken, and indeed faster than we were all prepared for.

"My uncle, who had the most to do to make the journey possible, at once fixed his eye on this alone. You know him and his way of always aiming at one thing only and completing it, while everything else must stand aside for the time being and be silent; by which means he has, to be sure, accomplished a great deal that would seem beyond the power of a private individual. This journey came as something of a surprise to him, yet he was able to adjust his plans at once. Building projects he had undertaken, and even started on, were suspended, and since, as an intelligent manager of his finances, he never wants to touch his savings, he looked about for other resources. The obvious step was to call in outstanding debts, especially tenants' rents. For this too was a part of his character, that he was accommodating to debtors, so long as he himself did not reach the point of need. His steward received the list; the necessary steps were left to him. We learned nothing about the details. I only happened to hear in passing that the tenant of one of our farms, with whom my uncle had long had patience, was finally to be evicted, his deposit retained as a poor substitute for the loss, and the farm let to someone else. This man belonged to the sect called the 'The Silent Ones,' but was not, like his fellows, particularly prudent and hardworking. Though he was loved for his piety and kindness, yet he was faulted for his weaknesses as husbandman. After his wife died, his one daughter, who was known only as the nut-brown maid, was, although she already gave promise of becoming energetic and resolute, still much too young to take things in hand. In short, the man was on the downward path, and my uncle's clemency could not have altered his fate.

"My journey was uppermost in my mind and I had to approve whatever measures made it possible. Everything was ready, the packing and the leave-taking began, every moment counted. One evening I was wandering through the grounds for the last time, to say farewell to the familiar trees and bushes, when suddenly Valerine stepped into my path; for that was the girl's name, the other was only a nickname, because of her brown complexion. She stepped into my path."

Lenardo paused for a moment and reflected. "What is wrong with me? Was her name really Valerine? Oh, yes," he continued, "but her nickname was more common. Be that as it may, the brown skinned maid stepped into my path and begged me urgently to put in a good word for her father, for herself, with my uncle. Since I knew what the situation was and could see that it would be difficult, indeed impossible, to do anything for her at this juncture, I told her so honestly

and represented her father's responsibility for his own misfortunes in an unfavorable light.

"She replied with so much clarity, and at the same time with so much filial forbearance and love, that she completely won me over, and if it had been my own money, I would promptly have made her happy by granting her request. But the rents belonged to my uncle, these were his arrangements, his orders; given his way of thinking, and what had already passed, there was nothing to hope for. I had always considered promises sacred. When someone asked me a favor, I was thrown into confusion. I had become so accustomed to refusing that I never even made promises that I intended to keep. This habit once more served me well. Her reasons were based on exceptional circumstances and affection; mine were based on duty and reason, and I cannot deny that in the end they seemed too rigid even to me. We had already repeated ourselves several times without convincing each other, when necessity made her more eloquent, and the inescapable ruin which she saw before her brought tears to her eyes. Her composure did not entirely desert her, but she spoke animatedly, with emotion, and while I continued to feign coldness and detachment, she gave vent to all her feelings. I wanted to put an end to the scene, but suddenly she was at my feet, had taken my hand, kissed it, and looked up at me so sweetly and imploringly that for the moment I did not know myself. Quickly I said, as I raised her up, 'I will do whatever is possible; calm yourself, my dear!' and with that I turned onto a side path. 'Do the impossible!' she called after me. I no longer know what I meant to say, but I replied, 'I shall . . .,' and hesitated. 'Do!' she exclaimed, with an expression of heavenly hope. I said good-bye and hurried off.

"I did not want to approach my uncle first, for I knew only too well not to remind him of details when he had his mind fixed on the whole. I looked for the steward; he was off somewhere on his horse. Guests came for the evening, friends who wished to bid me farewell. We played games, we feasted until far into the night. They stayed the following day, and the distraction erased the image of the suppliant. The steward returned; he was busier and more harrassed than ever. Everybody wanted to see him. He had no time to hear me, but still I tried to detain him. Yet I had barely mentioned the pious tenant when he energetically stopped me. 'In God's name, say nothing of this to your uncle, if you do not want any unpleasantness.' The day of my departure was set. I had letters to write, company to receive, calls to make in the neighborhood. My attendants had served me adequately until now, but were by no means skilled at preparing for a long journey. Everything fell on me; and yet, when the steward gave me an hour late one evening to arrange money matters, I ventured once again to plead for Valerine's father.

“‘My dear baron,’ said the energetic man, ‘how can you think of such a thing? Even without this I had a difficult time with your uncle today. What you need in order to set out is far more than we had thought. To be sure, this is quite natural, but still troublesome. The old gentleman is particularly displeased when something seems settled and then new details crop up. But that is how it often is, and we others have to bear the brunt. Concerning the severity with which the outstanding debts are to be collected, he has imposed a binding principle on himself; he is in accord with himself about it, and it would be difficult to persuade him to be lenient. Do not try, I beg of you! It would be utterly in vain.’

“I allowed myself to be deterred from my petition, but not entirely. I urged him, since the execution, after all, rested with him, to be gentle and fair. He promised everything, as such people will in order to be left alone for the moment. He was rid of me; the haste, the distractions increased. I sat in the coach and turned my back on every involvement I might have had at home.

“A powerful impression is like any other wound; one does not feel it when one first receives it. Only later does it begin to hurt and fester. Thus it was with that encounter in the garden. Whenever I was lonely, whenever I was unoccupied, there rose before me the image of the imploring maiden, together with the entire setting, with every tree and shrub, the spot where she knelt, the path I took to escape from her, all merged in a single image, fresh before my mind. It was an inextinguishable impression, overshadowed, to be sure, by other images and sympathies, obscured, but never blotted out. With new vividness it returned in every quiet hour, and the more time passed, the more painfully I felt the guilt I had incurred, contrary to my principles, contrary to my habit, although not explicitly, and only in a stammered utterance, for the first time at a loss in such a situation.

“I did not fail, in my first letters to our steward, to ask what had happened. He put me off with his answers. Finally he proceeded to reply to my question. But his words were ambiguous, and in the end he fell silent on the matter. Distances grew; more things came between me and my home; many observations, many involvements claimed my attention. The image disappeared; of the girl hardly anything was left, save for her name. The memory of her came to the fore more rarely, and my whim of communicating with my family not through letters but only through tokens contributed to making my previous existence, with all its circumstances, fade almost entirely. Only now, as I draw nearer to home, and mean to repay my family with interest for what they have been deprived of, this strange remorse—I myself must call it strange—attacks me again with full force. The figure of the girl appears fresh before me, along with the figures of all my family,

and I fear nothing more than to learn that she was undone by the misfortune into which I thrust her. For my negligence now seems to have been an act leading to her destruction, a compounding of her sad fate. I have already told myself a thousand times that this feeling is at bottom only a weakness, that I had been driven only by fear of remorse to that early principle of never promising anything, not by any nobler sentiment. And now this very remorse, from which I had fled, seems to be taking revenge upon me by seizing on this particular case, instead of a thousand others, to torment me. Yet at the same time, the image, the vision which tortures me, is so pleasant, so lovely, that I linger gladly over it. And when I think of it, the kiss she pressed on my hand still seems to burn there."

Lenardo fell silent, and Wilhelm replied quickly and cheerfully, "Then I could have done you no greater service than through the appendix to my report, just as the most interesting part of a letter is often contained in the postscript. To be sure, I know only a little about Valerine, for I learned about her only in passing. But there is no doubt she is the wife of a prosperous landowner and lives content, as your aunt assured me when I was leaving."

"Good," Lenardo said. "Now nothing holds me back. You have absolved me, and we must set out at once for my family, who have already been waiting longer than is proper." Wilhelm replied, "Unfortunately I cannot accompany you. For I am under a peculiar obligation not to stay anywhere longer than three days, and once I have left a place not to return to it for a year. Forgive me if I may not explain the basis for this peculiarity."

"I am sorry," Lenardo said, "that we must lose you so soon, and that I cannot help you with something in return. But since you are doing me favors, you would make me very happy if you would call on Valerine, inform yourself accurately of her situation, and then impart to me by letter or orally—for a third meeting place can surely be found—all you have discovered, to set my heart at rest."

This proposal was discussed further; Wilhelm had been told where Valerine lived. He undertook to visit her; a third location was fixed, to which the baron was to come and also bring Felix, who had remained in the meantime with the ladies.

Lenardo and Wilhelm had continued on their way, riding side by side through pleasant meadows, discussing all manner of things, when they approached the main road and caught up with the baron's coach, which, accompanied by its master, was to return home. Here the friends were to separate, and Wilhelm took leave with a few friendly words and once more promised the baron early news of Valerine.

"When I consider," replied Lenardo, "that it would be only a short detour if I went with you, why should I not seek out Valerine myself?"

Why not convince myself of her happy circumstances in person? You were so good as to offer your services as a messenger; why not be my companion? For I must have a companion, a moral counsel, as one takes legal counsel when one does not feel adequate to handle a lawsuit."

Wilhelm's objections that he had been awaited at home for so long, that it would make a strange impression for the coach to return without him, and other arguments of this sort, had no effect on Lenardo, and in the end Wilhelm had to agree to act as companion, although, fearing the probable consequences, he was not at ease.

The servants were instructed as to what to say when they arrived, and the friends now took the road which led to Valerine's residence. The region seemed rich and fertile, an ideal setting for agriculture. And so too in the area that belonged to Valerine's husband the soil was excellent and cultivated with care. Wilhelm had time to observe the landscape well, since Lenardo rode beside him in silence. Finally Lenardo began, "Another man in my position would perhaps try to approach Valerine without being recognized; for it is always embarrassing to come face to face with someone you have injured. But I would rather do that and endure the reproach I fear from her first glances than protect myself by disguise and subterfuge. Subterfuge can lead to as much embarrassment as truth, and if we compare how often one or the other helps us, it would always seem worth the effort to choose the truth once and for all. So let us go forward confidently; I will give my name and introduce you as my friend and companion."

They had now reached the courtyard of the estate and dismounted in its precincts. A handsome man in simple dress, who could have been taken for a tenant farmer, came toward them and identified himself as the master of the house. Lenardo gave his name, and the owner seemed very pleased to see him and make his acquaintance. "What will my wife say," he exclaimed, "when she sees the nephew of our benefactor here? She never tires of recounting what she and her father owe to your uncle."

What strange thoughts swirled in Lenardo's mind! "Is this man, who looks so upright, hiding his bitterness behind a friendly manner and smooth words? Is he capable of giving his reproaches such an agreeable appearance? Did my uncle not make this family wretched? can this have remained unknown to him? Or else—" he thought with a rush of hope, "did it not turn out as badly as you think? After all, you never did receive definite information." Such suppositions darted back and forth, while the master of the house had a horse harnessed to fetch his wife, who was paying a call in the neighborhood.

"If I may entertain you in the meantime, until my wife comes, in my own fashion and at the same time attend to my affairs, take a few steps with me into the fields and see how I manage my farm. Surely

for you, as a large landowner, nothing is of more consequence than the noble science, the noble art of agriculture." Lenardo did not disagree; Wilhelm was always glad to learn something new; and the farmer knew every detail of his land, of which he was full owner and manager. Whatever he undertook was in accord with his purposes; whatever he sowed and planted was in just the right place. He could give such clear explanations of the procedures and the reasons for them that anyone could understand and might think it possible to undertake the same thing and succeed, an illusion to which one easily succumbs when watching a master who is adept at everything.

The visitors expressed their delight and could bestow only praise and approval. He accepted this gratefully and cordially, but added, "Now I must show you my weak side, which to be sure is common to everyone who devotes himself completely to one object." He led them to his farmyard and showed them his tools—his array of them along with his collection of every conceivable implement and attachment. "I have often been criticized," he commented, "for going too far in this matter. However, I cannot find it reprehensible. Happy the man whose vocation also becomes his favorite pastime, so that he ends up playing at it and takes pleasure in that which his station also makes a duty."

The two friends were not remiss in asking questions and seeking information. Wilhelm particularly enjoyed the general observations to which this man seemed given, and was ready with his own rejoinders, while Lenardo, more withdrawn, was silently rejoicing in Valerine's happiness, which in this situation seemed certain. Yet he was aware of a slight uneasiness, for which he could not account.

They had already returned to the house when the cart returned with the mistress. They hurried out to meet her; but how astounded, how startled Lenardo was when he saw her dismount. She was not, it was not, the nut-brown maid, rather quite the opposite; she was, to be sure, a pretty, slender figure, but blond, with all the advantages natural to blondes.

Her beauty, her grace, startled Lenardo. His eyes had expected the brown girl; now quite another glowed before him. These features he recalled also; the way she addressed him, her bearing soon removed any doubt: she was the daughter of the magistrate, whom his uncle held in high regard, and so his uncle had contributed a good deal toward the dowry of the daughter and had been helpful to the newlyweds. The young woman joyfully referred to all of this and more in the course of her greeting, with unfeigned pleasure at the surprise of seeing Lenardo again. She asked whether he would have recognized her, and there was some discussion of the changes in appearance which are noticeable enough in persons of this age. Valerine was always pleas-

ant, but she became positively charming when happiness plucked her out of her customary placidity. The company waxed talkative, and the conversation so lively that Lenardo could master himself and conceal his dismay. Wilhelm, whose friend had given him a hasty hint of the strange situation, did his best to assist Lenardo. And Valerine's touch of vanity at the baron's remembering her and visiting her even before returning to his own family, prevented the least suspicion that a different intention or a misconception was at work.

They remained together until late in the night, although the two friends longed to speak privately, which, then, they at once began to do when they were alone in the guest chamber.

"It would seem," said Lenardo, "that I am not to be rid of my agony. An unfortunate mix-up of names, I see, compounds it. I often saw this blond beauty playing with the dark girl, whom no one would have called pretty; in fact I, though so much older, used to roam about with them in the fields and gardens. Neither of them made the slightest impression on me; I have retained only the name of the one and attached it to the other. Now I find the one who means nothing to me, tremendously fortunate in her way, while the other is cast adrift in the world, who knows where."

The next morning the two friends were up almost earlier than the industrious country folk. The happy prospect of seeing her guests had also wakened Valerine betimes. She could not guess with what thoughts they came to breakfast. Wilhelm, who perceived that without some news of the nut-brown maid Lenardo would be in a most painful plight, brought the conversation around to earlier times, to playmates, to the locality with which he himself had become acquainted, to other recollections of that sort, so that by and by Valerine was naturally prompted to mention the nut-brown maid and to speak her name.

No sooner had Lenardo heard the name Nachodine than he recalled it perfectly; but with the name, the image of the suppliant returned as well, with such force that he found it quite intolerable when Valerine described with warm sympathy the eviction of the pious tenant, his resignation and his departure, and how he leaned upon his daughter, who carried a small bundle. Lenardo felt he must sink through the floor. Unfortunately, or fortunately, Valerine went into a certain amount of detail, which, though tearing at Lenardo's heart, nevertheless enabled him, with his companion's assistance, to muster a certain composure.

They departed amidst fulsome, sincere entreaties by the couple that they return soon, and half-hearted, disingenuous expressions of willingness by the guests. And as everything adds to the happiness of those who feel entitled to it, Valerine finally interpreted Lenardo's silence, his obvious distraction as he took leave, and his hasty departure, to

her own advantage, and, faithful and loving wife of a manly farmer though she was, could still not but discover a certain pleasure in what she perceived as the freshly awakened or reborn affection of her former lord.

After this curious incident, Lenardo said, "Now that we, despite such bright hopes, have foundered so close to the harbor, I can console myself somewhat, calm myself for the moment and proceed to my family, only when I consider that Providence has brought you to me, you, whose unusual mission makes you indifferent to the road and purpose you follow. Take it upon yourself to find Nachodine and give me tidings of her. If she is happy, then I am satisfied; if she is unhappy, help her at my expense. Act without reservations; save, spare nothing."

"But to what quarter of the globe," asked Wilhelm with a smile, "should I bend my steps? If you have no idea, how am I to guess?"

"Listen," Lenardo replied, "last night, when you saw me in despair, restlessly pacing, as everything tumbled wildly through my heart and mind, an old friend came into my thoughts, a worthy man, who, though not exactly my tutor, nevertheless had a great influence upon my youth. I would have happily requested that he be my traveling companion, at least for part of the way, were he not strangely bound to his home by a collection of the most beautiful works of art and antiquities, which he leaves only for brief moments. This man, I know, enjoys an extensive acquaintance with everything in this world which is held together by noble ties. Hasten to him, tell him what I have told you, and it is to be hoped that his subtle intuition will suggest to him some place, some region, where she might be found. In my distress it occurred to me that the girl's father belonged to the Pietists, and at that moment I became pious enough to turn to the moral world order and beg it to show itself miraculously merciful to me this once."

"One further difficulty, however, remains to be solved," replied Wilhelm. "What shall I do with my Felix? I would not want to take him on such very uncertain pathways, and yet I would not willingly leave him, either. For I believe that a son develops nowhere better than in the presence of his father."

"Not at all!" Lenardo responded. "That is a touching fatherly error. A father always retains a certain despotic relationship to his son, whose virtues he does not recognize and in whose faults he takes pleasure. For which reason even the ancients used to say, 'The sons of heroes become good-for-nothings,' and I have seen enough of the world to be clear on this score. Fortunately our old friend, to whom I shall write a quick note, will also have excellent advice on this topic. When I last saw him a few years ago, he told me a great deal about a pedagogic association, which I could imagine only as a kind of utopia. It seemed to me that under the guise of reality he was presenting a series of ideas,

thoughts, proposals, and intentions that were consistent, to be sure, but in the usual course of things could hardly occur together. But because I know him, because he likes to evoke the possible and the impossible through images, I listened seriously. And now that stands us in good stead; he can surely tell you the location and circumstances in which you can confidently leave your boy and hope for the best results from wise guidance."

Riding along and talking thus, the two saw before them a noble country residence, the buildings in sober yet friendly taste, with an open space in front of it and in the spacious, dignified surroundings stately trees. But all doors and sashes were locked, everything deserted, though apparently well tended. From an elderly man, who seemed to be busy at the entrance, they learned that this was the inheritance of a young man to whom it had just been left by his father, who had died only recently at an advanced age.

Upon further inquiry, they were informed that everything here was unfortunately too complete for the heir; he had nothing more to do here, and enjoying what was already there was not his nature; therefore he had sought out a place nearer the mountains, where he was building sod huts for himself and his companions, and wanted to establish a sort of hermitage for hunters. As for their informant himself, they learned that he was the castellan who had been inherited with the property, that he took utmost care to preserve and maintain it so that some future grandchild, sharing his grandfather's inclinations and property, would find everything as the latter had left it.

After they had proceeded on their way for a while in silence, Lenardo began with the observation that it was a peculiarity of people to want always to start afresh. His friend replied that this was easy to explain and forgive, because, strictly speaking, everyone actually does start from the beginning. "For no one," he exclaimed, "is ever exempt from the pains which his forefathers suffered. Can you blame him for not wanting to miss any of their pleasures?"

To this Lenardo replied, "You give me courage to confess that I would actually not want to devote my energy to anything but what I have created myself. I have never cared for a servant I did not raise from a boy, nor a horse I did not break myself. I must also tell you that as a result of this attitude, I am irresistibly drawn toward primitive conditions, that my travels among all the civilized countries and peoples could not dull these feelings, that my imagination seeks its pleasure across the seas, and that neglected family property in those fresh territories makes me hope that I may one day execute, in accordance with my wishes, a plan which I conceived in secret and which has gradually matured."

"I should have no objection to that," Wilhelm said. "Such a notion, directed toward the new and undefined, has something original and grand about it. I would merely ask you to consider that such a venture can succeed only if undertaken by a group. You will go over and find holdings already in the family, as I know. My associates have similar plans and have already settled there. Join these cautious, intelligent, and energetic people, and the enterprise will be simplified and enlarged for both of you."

Conversing thus, our friends had reached the place where they were again to part. Both of them sat down to write, Lenardo commending his friend to the above-mentioned remarkable man, while Wilhelm reported to the league the situation of his new companion, which report became, as was only natural, a letter of introduction. Toward the end he pressed his own case, as he had discussed it with Jarno, and once more explained why he wished to be released, as soon as possible, from the condition that stamped him as a Wandering Jew.

As they exchanged these letters, Wilhelm could not resist raising once more certain reservations with his friend.

"In my position," he said, "I consider it the most desirable of assignments to free you, my noble friend, from distress of mind and at the same time to rescue a human creature from misery, should that be her condition. One may view such a goal as a star, by which one navigates even without knowing what one may encounter, what one may meet along the way. Yet I cannot overlook the danger which still hangs over you. Were you not a man who always refuses to give his word, I would demand your promise never to see again this young woman who has cost you so much, but to be satisfied if I report that she is faring well, regardless of whether I really found her in a happy state or were able to further her happiness. Since, however, I neither can nor wish to extract promises from you, I implore you, by all that is precious and holy to you, for the sake of you and yours, and of me, your newly won friend, not to allow yourself to approach the lost one, under any pretext whatsoever. You must not ask me to describe or to specify where I have found her, or in what region I have left her: you must take my word that she is well; you must be absolved and set at rest."

Lenardo replied with a smile, "Do me this service, and I shall be grateful. What you desire to or can do shall be left up to you, and you must leave me to the influence of time, understanding, and, if possible, reason." "Forgive me," Wilhelm answered, "but knowing in what strange forms love can steal in on us, a person may well be anxious when he foresees that a friend might desire something that would necessarily bring unhappiness and confusion upon him, given his circumstances and relationships."

"I hope," said Lenardo, "that when I know the girl is happy, I shall be free of her."

The friends parted, each going his own way.

Chapter Twelve

After a short and pleasant ride Wilhelm had reached the town to which his letter was addressed. He found it cheerful and well built; only its new appearance showed all too clearly that it must recently have suffered from fire. The address on his letter led him to the small quarter which alone had been spared, to a house in an older, sober style but well maintained and of tidy appearance. The dark window glass, leaded with great artistry, promised wonderful color effects inside. And indeed the interior truly corresponded to the outside. Everywhere in immaculate rooms stood utensils that must already have served several generations, intermingled with a few new ones. The master of the house welcomed Wilhelm kindly in a room furnished in this fashion. These clocks had already struck the hour for many a birth and death, and the other pieces testified that the past could well pass on into the present.

The new arrival delivered his letter, but the recipient laid it aside without opening it and tried to make his guest's acquaintance directly, through pleasant conversation. They were soon at ease with one another, and as Wilhelm, contrary to his usual custom, let his eyes wander inquisitively about the room, the old man remarked, "My surroundings arouse your interest. Here you see how long something can last, and indeed one must see such things, as a counterbalance to all that is replaced and changes so rapidly in the world. This teakettle served my parents, and was a witness to our evening family gatherings; this copper fire screen still protects me from the fire which these massive old tongs stir up, and thus it is with everything. I have been able to turn my attention and efforts to many other things, since I did not bother with replacing these outward necessities, which consume the time and energy of so many people. Loving attention to one's possessions makes a man rich, in that he builds up a treasury of memories out of neutral things. I once knew a young man who, upon parting from the girl he loved, stole a pin of hers, fastened his neckcloth with it every day, and brought this cherished and protected treasure back from a long journey of many years' duration. This might well be considered a virtue for us ordinary folk."

"From such a long journey," Wilhelm replied, "many a man might also bring back a thorn in his heart, which he would perhaps prefer

to be rid of." The old man seemed to know nothing of Lenardo's plight, although he had in the meantime opened and read the letter, for he returned to his former observations. "Our attachment to our possessions," he continued, "in many cases proves our greatest source of energy. I owe the preservation of my house to this persistence. When the town was on fire, they wanted to rescue what they could from my house and then flee. I forbade it, ordered the windows and doors to be shut, and with several neighbors turned against the flames. Our efforts succeeded in saving this tip of the town. The next morning everything still stood here as you see it now, and as it has stood for almost a century." "Despite all this," Wilhelm said, "you will grant that there is no resisting the changes time brings about." "To be sure," the old man said, "but he who holds out the longest has also achieved something.

"Indeed we are capable of preserving and securing things even beyond our own existence; we pass along knowledge, we bequeath ways of thinking as well as property, and now that my chief interest is for the latter, I have for some considerable time used extraordinary foresight, have thought out most unusual provisions. But only recently have I succeeded in fulfilling my wish.

"Usually the son scatters what the father has collected, and collects something else, or in a different manner. Yet if one can wait for the grandson, for the new generation, the same preferences, the same views will again come to the fore. And so, through the careful efforts of our pedagogic friends, I have acquired a capable young man who values even more than myself, if possible, possessions inherited from earlier times and has a passionate interest in strange objects. He won my confidence decisively by his tremendous exertions in keeping the fire away from our house. He has earned two and three times over the treasure I mean to leave to him; in fact, I have already handed it over to him, and since then our stores have increased in a remarkable fashion.

"But not everything you see here belongs to us. Rather, as you usually see many another person's jewel at the pawnbroker's, I can also show you valuables here which people have deposited with us, under a great variety of circumstances, for safekeeping." Wilhelm thought of the magnificent casket, which in any case he did not want to carry about with him on his journey, and did not refrain from showing it to his friend. The old man looked at it attentively, gave the probable date of its making, and brought out a similar one. Wilhelm raised the question of whether it should be opened. The old man did not think so. "To be sure, I suppose it could be done without undue harm. However, since you came by it through such a curious chance, you ought to try your luck on it. If you were born fortunate, and if this

casket has any significance, then the key to it must turn up sometime, and precisely where you least expect it." "There probably are such cases," Wilhelm replied. "I have experienced several myself," answered the old man, "and here you see the most remarkable example before you: this ivory crucifix. For thirty years I owned the body with head and feet all in one piece, and because of its wonderful artistry kept the object in a most precious little box. About ten years ago I obtained the cross which belonged to it, along with the inscription, and I let myself be seduced into having arms attached by the most skillful carver of our times. But this good man lagged so far behind his predecessor! Still, I left it as it was, more for the sake of edifying reflections than out of admiration for the craftsmanship.

"But now imagine my delight! Not long ago I obtained the original arms, as you see them here refitted in the most exquisite union. Delighted by such a fortunate set of coincidences, I cannot but see in this the fate of the Christian religion, which, often enough dismembered and dispersed, must in the end always come together again around the Cross."

Wilhelm admired the image and its strange fate. "I shall follow your advice," he added. "Let the casket remain locked until the key turns up, even if it should stay that way to the end of my life." "Those who live long," said the old man, "see many things collected and many others dispersed."

The young joint owner appeared, and Wilhelm declared his intention of delivering the casket to their care. A huge book was fetched, and the entrusted article was entered. With many formalities and stipulations a receipt was issued, which would be valid regardless of who should present it, but would be honored only when the bearer gave an agreed-upon sign.

When all this had been completed, they reflected on the contents of the letter, conferring first on what accommodation should be made for the good Felix. In this connection, the old man without more ado delivered himself of certain maxims concerning the basis of all education.

"All living, all activity, all art must be preceded by technical skill, which can be acquired only through limitation. To know one thing properly and be adept at it results in higher cultivation than half-competence in a hundred different fields. Where I am sending you, all the fields of endeavor have been divided up. The pupil is tested at each step; thus the true bent of his nature can be ascertained, even though he may be turned from his path by competing desires. Wise men subtly help the boy find what suits him best. They shorten the detours by which we all too gladly tend to stray from our true calling.

"Afterwards," he continued, "I have reason to hope that from that splendidly established center someone will direct you to where you can find that good girl, who has made such a singular impression on your friend. His moral sense and concern have set so high a value upon an innocent and unfortunate creature that he was obliged to make her existence the aim and purpose of his life. I hope you will be able to reassure him, for Providence has a thousand ways to raise up the fallen and lift up the bowed. Often our fate resembles a fruit tree in winter. Who, seeing its dismal appearance, would ever think that these stiff branches, these jagged twigs could turn green again in the coming spring, blossom, and then bear fruit; yet this we hope, this we know."

Book Two

Chapter One

The pilgrims had followed instructions and found their way successfully to the border of the province in which many a marvel awaited them. As they rode into it, they at once saw before them a most fertile region, whose rolling hills favored field crops, its mountainous parts sheep raising, and the broad, level valleys cattle raising. It was shortly before harvest time, and everything at its most bountiful. Yet what instantly aroused their wonder was that neither women nor men were to be seen, but only boys and youths at work, preparing for a successful harvest, indeed making arrangements already for a joyous harvest feast. They greeted one and another of the boys and asked for the Superior, of whose whereabouts, however, no one could give any account. The address on their letter read: "To the Superior, or the Three." Here, too, the boys could not comply. They referred the travelers, however, to a supervisor who was just preparing to mount his horse. They explained their purpose; Felix's ingenuous manner seemed to please the man, and so they rode off down the road together.

Wilhelm had already noticed in the young people's clothing a diversity in cut and color that gave a singular aspect to the little community. He was just about to ask his guide about this, when an even more curious observation impressed itself upon him: all the children, no matter what they were engaged in, dropped their work and turned, with distinct but varied gestures, toward the party as it rode by, and it could easily be deduced that this was intended for the supervisor. The youngest ones crossed their arms over their chests and looked cheerfully heavenward, the middle ones put their hands behind their backs and looked smilingly down at the earth, the third group stood stiffly and bravely: with their arms at their sides they turned their faces to the right and formed themselves into a row, instead of each standing alone where he had been.

When the riders later stopped and dismounted, at a spot where several children were lining up in various postures and being reviewed

by the supervisor, Wilhelm inquired after the meaning of the gestures. Felix interrupted to ask cheerfully, "What position should I be taking?" "In any case," the supervisor replied, "first your arms across your chest and gravely but joyfully looking upwards, without shifting your gaze." Felix obeyed, but soon exclaimed, "I do not like this much. I do not see anything up there. Must I do this long? But oh!" he exclaimed happily, "a pair of hawks is flying from west to east; that is surely a good omen?"

"However you take it, behave accordingly," the supervisor replied. "Now mingle with them, as they mingle among themselves." He gave a signal, and the children abandoned their positions, resuming their work or returning to their play.

"May you and can you explain the meaning," Wilhelm said, "of all this, which causes me such amazement? It seems clear to me that these gestures, these positions, are salutations, by which you are received." "Quite right," the other man replied, "salutations which at once indicate to me at which stage of his education each of these boys stands."

"Are you permitted to explain," Wilhelm continued, "the significance of this progression of stages? For it is quite evident that it is one." "That would be for persons higher than myself," the supervisor answered, "but of this much I may assure you: these are not empty posturings; rather the children have had imparted to them, not the ultimate significance, but at least a guiding meaning that is within their grasp. Yet each is told to keep to himself and to cherish whatever insight it has been judged good to convey to him. They must not chatter about it either with strangers or among themselves, and so our teachings can be adjusted to each individual. Furthermore, secrecy has great benefits. For if a person is always told at once what everything means, he will think there is nothing behind it. Certain mysteries, even if they could be explained, must be shown respect through veiling and silence, for this promotes modesty and good morals."

"I understand you," replied Wilhelm. "Why should we not practice what is so essential in regard to physical matters also in regard to the spiritual? But perhaps you can satisfy my curiosity in another connection. I have been struck by the great diversity in the cut and color of the clothing, and yet I do not see all colors, but only certain ones, in all their gradations, from the lightest to the darkest. Yet I observe that no indication of levels of age or merit can be intended, since the smallest and the largest boys seem intermingled as regards the color and cut of their dress, while those with the same gestures do not match each other in their clothing."

"Again I must refrain from saying what lies behind all this," the guide replied. "But I should be very much mistaken if you were not given as full an explanation as you wish before you take leave of us."

They now set out on the track of the Superior, whom they thought to have located. But the newcomer could not but be struck by a melodious singing that was heard ever more clearly the deeper they advanced into the country. Whatever the boys were engaged in, at whatever work one found them, they were always singing, and indeed the songs seemed particularly suited to each task, and the same song recurred wherever the same kind of work was underway. Where a number of children gathered, they accompanied one another in turn; toward evening the newcomers also saw dancers, whose steps were enlivened and regulated by children singing in chorus. Felix joined in from his saddle, and not at all badly, while Wilhelm was much diverted by this form of recreation, which enlivened the region.

"Apparently," he remarked to his companion, "much care is devoted to instruction in this activity, for otherwise the skill would not be so widespread and so highly developed." "Yes, indeed," was the reply. "We make singing the first stage of education. Everything else follows from it and is conveyed through it. The simplest pleasure as well as the simplest lesson is enlivened here through song and imprinted on the memory. Even our religious and moral teachings are communicated by way of song. Entirely different purposes derive immediate benefits from it as well, for when we train the children to write the notes they produce in symbols on their slates and on the basis of the symbols to find these notes again in their throats, and then to put the text to them, they are training hands, ears, and eyes simultaneously, and learn spelling and penmanship more quickly than one might think. And since all this must eventually be executed and imitated according to accurate measures and precise numbers, they grasp the high value of the arts of measurement and arithmetic far more quickly than in any other way. This is why we have chosen music, from among all the conceivable subjects, as the key element of our education, since smooth paths lead from it in all directions."

Wilhelm tried to learn more, and did not conceal his amazement that he heard no instrumental music. "We do not neglect this," his guide responded, "but it is practiced in a special district, isolated in the pleasantest of mountain valleys, and there, too, we see to it that each instrument is taught in a separate village. The wrong notes of beginners especially are confined to certain solitary spots, where they will not drive anyone to distraction. For you yourself will admit that to the well-regulated middle-class household there is hardly a more miserable torture to be suffered than that imposed by a beginning flutist or violinist in the vicinity.

"Our beginners betake themselves of their own accord into the desert, in the praiseworthy desire not to be burdensome to anyone. They stay away for a longer or shorter period, and in their isolation apply

themselves zealously to their instruments, so as to be worthy of returning to the populated world. From time to time they are allowed to make a trial appearance, and it seldom goes awry, since we know how to foster shame and pride by this arrangement, as by all our others. That your son possesses a good voice pleases me greatly, for the rest will take care of itself that much more easily."

By now they had reached the place where Felix was to stay and prove himself in his surroundings, until it might be time to admit him formally. From some distance they heard a joyful song; it was a game with which the boys were amusing themselves, now that the workday was ended. A general chorus resounded, in which, at the nod of the conductor, each member of a large circle joined with his own part, joyfully, clearly, and vigorously. The conductor, however, often took the singers by surprise, suspending the chorale with a sign and calling upon some individual participant, whom he touched with his baton, to sing a suitable solo which took up where the other voices died away and carried on in the same spirit. The majority displayed considerable skill; some, who could not manage it, willingly surrendered their pledges without precisely being laughed at. Felix was child enough to plunge into their midst and acquit himself tolerably. Afterward he was directed to use that first salutation: he promptly crossed his hands on his chest and gazed upward, and yet with so waggish an expression that it was plain he was not yet aware of any secret meaning to the gesture.

The agreeable spot, the warm welcome, and the jolly playmates all pleased the boy so much that he was not greatly upset at seeing his father ride away. Watching his horse be led off was almost more painful to him. But he accepted it when he learned that he could not keep the horse in this district. He was promised in return that another, if not the same one, spirited and well trained, would later come his way when he least expected it.

Since the Superior was inaccessible, the supervisor said, "I must leave you now and attend to my duties. But I will take you to the Three, who preside over our sanctuaries. Your letter is directed to them as well, and together they represent the Superior."

Wilhelm would have liked to hear something about the sanctuaries in advance, but the other replied, "In return for the trust you have shown in leaving your son under our care, the Three will surely reveal to you the most important matters, as far as wisdom and discretion dictate. The visible objects of veneration, which I called our sanctuaries, are isolated in a special district, so that nothing may mix with them, nothing disturb them. Only at certain times of the year are the pupils allowed to enter there, depending on their level of development, in order to be instructed historically and visually, so that they may

carry away a strong enough impression to live on for a while as they perform their tasks."

Wilhelm now stood at a gate in a high wall which surrounded a wooded valley. At a certain sign a little door opened, and a grave, imposing man received our friend. He found himself in a large, magnificently planted space, shaded by trees and shrubs of many varieties; he was scarcely able to glimpse the stately walls and handsome buildings through this luxuriant and tall greenery. A friendly reception by the Three, who made their appearance one by one, led to a conversation to which each contributed his thoughts, but whose content we shall summarize briefly.

"Since you are entrusting your son to us," they said, "we owe it to you to let you look deeper into our method. You have seen many external signs which do not immediately lend themselves to understanding. Which of these would you particularly want to have explained?"

"I have seen gestures and salutations which, while seemly enough, are nevertheless strange, and whose meaning I should like to learn. Among you, the outward surely refers to the inward, and vice versa; let me learn of this connection."

"Well-born, healthy children," they replied, "bring a great deal with them. Nature has endowed each of them with whatever he would need for time and duration. Our duty is to develop these things, though often they develop better on their own. But there is one thing that no one brings with him into the world, and yet it is this on which everything depends and by which man becomes human in the full sense. If you can identify it yourself, then speak its name." Wilhelm reflected for a short while, then shook his head.

The others, after a decent interval, exclaimed, "Reverence!" Wilhelm was startled. "Reverence!" they repeated. "Everyone lacks it, perhaps even you yourself.

"You have seen three sets of gestures, and we teach a threefold reverence, which reaches its greatest strength and effectiveness only when it flows as one and forms a whole. The first is reverence for that which is above us. That gesture, the arms crossed over the chest and a joyful gaze toward the sky, is what we require of young children, thereby demanding they testify that there is a God above who is reflected and manifested in their parents, teachers, and superiors. The second: reverence for that which is beneath us. The hands held behind the back, bound, as it were, and the lowered smiling glance say that one must regard the earth carefully and serenely; it affords nourishment, it furnishes unutterable delights, but it also produces disproportionate suffering. If someone suffers bodily injury, by his own doing or innocently, if others deliberately or inadvertently injure him, if the

indifference of the earth inflicts some suffering upon him, let him consider it well, for this sort of peril remains with him his whole life long. But we liberate our pupil from this position as quickly as possible, as soon as we are certain that the lesson of this stage has had sufficient effect. Then we call upon him to take courage, to turn to his comrades and be guided by them. Now he stands up straight and bold, but not in selfish isolation; only in alliance with others like him does he form a front against the world. Beyond that, we would not know what to add."

"This makes sense to me," Wilhelm replied. "This is why the majority of people are in such bad straits, because they wallow in ill will and ill speaking. Whoever succumbs to this habit soon grows indifferent toward God, contemptuous toward the world, and spiteful toward his fellow men; his true, authentic, indispensable sense of himself is consumed by presumption and arrogance. Will you allow me, nevertheless," Wilhelm continued, "to raise one objection? Was not the fear which primitive people felt in the face of the powerful phenomena of Nature and other inexplicable, ominous experiences considered the germ from which a higher feeling, a purer way of thinking would gradually develop?"

To this the others replied, "As a response to nature, fear is appropriate, but reverence is not. One fears a known or unknown mighty being. The strong try to resist it, the weak to avoid it. Both wish to be free of it, and consider themselves fortunate when they have eliminated it for a short while, during which their own nature can to some degree reassert its freedom and independence. Natural man repeats this operation a million times over in his life; enmeshed in fear, he strives for freedom, and is driven from freedom back into fear again, and cannot break this cycle. To be fearful is easy, but painful; to cultivate reverence is difficult, but comfortable. Only with reluctance does a person commit himself to reverence, or rather, he does not commit himself to it. It is a higher sense that must be given to him, and that develops by itself only in certain specially favored natures, who from time immemorial have been called saints or gods on this account. Herein lies the majesty and the chief concern of all true religions, of which there are only three, to judge by the objects of their devotion."

The men paused, and Wilhelm, too, reflected in silence for a while. Since he could not presume to interpret their strange words, he asked the sages to continue their discourse, a wish to which they immediately acceded. "Among us," they said, "no religion based on fear is respected. When a person lets himself be governed by reverence, he preserves his honor in paying honor; he is not at odds with himself, as in the other case. The religion founded on reverence for that which is above us we call the ethnic religion; this is the religion of the multitude of

peoples, and the first successful liberation from servile fear. All the so-called pagan religions are of this sort, whatever names they go by. The second religion, based on reverence for that which is equal to us, we call the philosophic religion, since the philosopher, who locates himself in the middle, must draw all the higher elements down to him, while elevating lower elements to his own level, and only in this middle position does he merit the name of sage. Since he can survey his relationship to his kind, and thus to all mankind, and his relationship to all other earthly contexts, essential and fortuitous, he alone lives the truth, in the cosmic sense. But now we must speak of the third religion, which is based on reverence for that which is below us. We call this the Christian religion, because in it that kind of attitude is most strongly manifested. It is an ultimate to which humanity could and had to attain. But what must it have required, not only to leave the earth behind and to claim a higher birthplace, but also to acknowledge lowliness and poverty, scorn and contempt, humiliation and misery, suffering and death, as divine, yes, to regard even sin and crime not as barriers but as furtherances to saintliness, to venerate them and cherish them! To be sure, there are traces of such a view throughout the ages, but a trace is not a destination, and this once reached, mankind can no longer go backward, and, one may say, the Christian religion, having once made its appearance, can never vanish again. Having once embodied itself in divine form, it may never again be dissolved."

"Which of these religions do you especially profess?" Wilhelm inquired. "All three of them," they replied, "for the three taken together actually produce the true religion. From the three reverences springs the highest reverence, reverence for oneself, and the others are born once again from this latter, so that the individual can arrive at the highest attainment of which he is capable, so that he may view himself as the finest thing that God and Nature have produced, yes, so that he can remain at this height without being dragged back again to a common level by presumptuousness and self-centeredness."

"Such a profession of faith, presented in such a way, does not appear strange to me," Wilhelm responded. "It agrees with everything one hears here and there in life, except that you are united by what drives others apart." To this the others countered, "This profession of faith is already articulated by a great portion of the world, albeit unknowingly."

"How so, and where?" Wilhelm asked. "In the Creed," the others exclaimed. "For its first article is ethnic and belongs to all peoples; the second is Christian, for those contending with suffering and glorified by suffering; the third, finally, teaches an inspired communion of saints, which is to say, persons of the highest wisdom and goodness.

Should not then the three divine figures, in whose image and name such convictions and such promises are expressed, by rights stand for the highest Unity?"

"I thank you," Wilhelm said, "for being willing to present all this so clearly and coherently to me, who, after all, am an adult and not unacquainted with the three attitudes. And when I consider that you convey this high doctrine to the children, first as physical gesture, then with certain symbolic echoes, and finally in its highest significance, I must give your undertaking the highest praise."

"Quite right," the sages replied. "But now you must learn more, so that you can convince yourself that your son is in the best of hands. But let this be saved for the morning hours. Rest and refresh yourself so that, early in the morning, restored and in full possession of your human faculties, you may follow us into the inner sanctum."

Chapter Two

Led by the eldest, our hero now entered through a handsome portal into a round, or rather octagonal, hall so richly adorned with paintings as to fill the newcomer with astonishment. He readily grasped that everything he saw must have a special meaning, even though he could not decipher it so quickly. He was on the point of questioning his guide about it when the latter invited him to step into a side gallery, which, open on one side, enclosed a spacious garden, with a profusion of flowers. Yet his eyes were more drawn to the wall than to this brilliant natural decoration, for it was completely covered with frescoes, and the newcomer could not walk far along it without realizing that the sacred books of the Hebrews had provided the subjects of these paintings.

"This is where we pass on that religion," said the eldest, "which I described for the sake of brevity as the ethnic one. Its import can be found in world history, as its husk can be found in individual events. From the repetition of the destinies of entire peoples, one can come to understand it."

"As I see," said Wilhelm, "you have honored the people of Israel by making its history the basis for this representation, or rather, you have made that history its chief subject matter."

"You see rightly," the old man replied, "for as you will notice, on the base of the wall and the friezes are painted motifs and events that are not only synchronous but also symphonic, since accounts with similar meaning and signification occur among all peoples. Thus when Abraham is visited by his gods in the shape of comely youths, in the

main panel, in the frieze above you will see the scene of Apollo among Admetus' shepherds. Whence we may learn that when the gods appear among men, they usually walk unrecognized among them."

They continued on, contemplating the images. Wilhelm found mainly familiar objects, depicted, however, in a livelier, more significant way than he was accustomed to seeing. For a few details he requested some explanation. In this connection he could not forbear to ask once again why the history of the Israelites had been chosen over all others. To this the old man replied, "Among all the pagan religions—for such is also that of the Israelites—it has great advantages, of which I shall mention only a few. Before the ethnic judgment seat, before the judgment seat of the God of peoples, the question is not whether a nation was the best, the most admirable, but only whether it endured, whether it maintained its identity. The people of Israel was never worth much, as it was a thousand times admonished by its leaders, judges, chiefs, and prophets. It possesses few virtues and most of the faults of other peoples. But in self-reliance, constancy, bravery, and, should all these after all not matter, in tenacity, it has no equal. It is the most persistent people on earth; it is, it was, and it shall be, that it may glorify the name of Jehovah through the ages. That is why we have presented it here as a model, as the central subject, which the others only serve to frame."

"It does not behoove me to dispute with you," Wilhelm replied, "since you are in a position to instruct me. Explain to me therefore the other strengths of this people, or rather, of its history, its religion?"

"A principal strength," the sage replied, "is the splendid collection of its sacred books. They fit together so well that out of the most disparate elements a plausible whole can be constructed. They are sufficiently complete to be satisfying, sufficiently fragmentary to be intriguing, sufficiently barbaric to be challenging, sufficiently subtle to be soothing; and how many other paradoxical qualities can be celebrated in these books, in this book!"

The suite of pictures, as well as the connections to the smaller paintings that accompanied them above and below, gave the guest so much to think about that he scarcely listened to the profound observations by which his companion seemed more to distract his attention than to fix it on the objects. The latter, meanwhile, found occasion to remark, "Yet another strength of the Israelite religion I should mention here is that it does not represent its God in any corporeal form, and thereby leaves us free to give Him an exalted human form, and also, in contrast, to depict wicked idolatry in the form of animals and monsters."

Our friend had refreshed his memory of human history by a short stroll through these halls. He also perceived some new purpose to

events. Through the arrangement of the pictures, and through the reflections of his companion, new insights had come to him, and he was pleased that Felix should be introduced to these great, momentous, and exemplary occurrences through such fine and vivid depiction, so that for his entire life they would seem real, and as though they had taken place close by him. In the end, he looked at the pictures entirely with the eyes of his child, and in this spirit was completely satisfied with them. And thus on their walk they had reached the grievous, troubled times and finally the fall of the city and the Temple, the massacre, exile, and enslavement of whole masses of this persistent nation. Their subsequent fate had been wisely represented in allegorical form, since a historical, realistic illustration lay outside the scope of true art.

At this point, the gallery through which they had been strolling was suddenly closed off, and Wilhelm was astonished to see himself already at its end. "I find," he remarked to his guide, "a gap in this historical panorama. You have had the Temple in Jerusalem destroyed and the people dispersed, without introducing that godly man who not long before had preached there, and to whom they had not long before refused to listen."

"To do this as you demand would have been an error. The life of the godly man whom you mention has no connection with the history of his time. It was a private life, his teaching a teaching for individuals. What publicly befalls entire peoples and their members belongs to world history, and to that world religion which we consider the first. What privately befalls the individual belongs to the second religion, to the religion of the sages; it was such a religion that Christ preached and practiced, for the time he was on earth. That is why the outward religion comes to an end here, and I shall now reveal the inward one to you."

A door opened, and they entered a similar gallery, where Wilhelm immediately recognized the images of the second Holy Scripture. They seemed to be the work of a different artist: everything was gentler—figures, movements, surroundings, light, and coloration.

"You see here," said the guide after they had passed some of the pictures, "neither deeds nor events, but miracles and parables. This is a new world, a new outward reality, different from the preceding one, and an inner reality that was entirely lacking there. Through miracles and parables a new world is revealed. The former render the ordinary extraordinary, while the latter render the extraordinary ordinary."

"Would you have the kindness," Wilhelm said, "to explain these few words at greater length, for I do not feel able to do so by myself."

"They have a straightforward meaning," the old man replied, "albeit a deep one. Examples will clarify it soonest. Nothing is more common

or more familiar than eating and drinking. It is extraordinary, however, to so ennoble a drink or so multiply a meal that it could feed multitudes. There is nothing more common than sickness and bodily infirmity; but to cure them or ease them by spiritual means or those akin to the spiritual is extraordinary, and precisely herein lies the miraculousness of miracles, that the ordinary and the extraordinary, the possible and the impossible, become one. With similitudes and parables it is the reverse; here the meaning, the insight, the concept is the sublime, the extraordinary, the inaccessible. When this meaning becomes embodied in a common, familiar, apprehensible image, so that it confronts us in living, present, actual form, so that we can take possession of it, grasp it, hold it fast, so that we can treat it as our own kind, that is a second sort of miracle, properly ranked with the first, perhaps even preferred to it. Here the living doctrine is enunciated, the doctrine that elicits no contradiction. It is not an opinion on right and wrong; it is incontestably right or wrong itself."

This section of the gallery was shorter, or rather, it comprised only one quarter of the way around the inner court. However, though one merely walked past the frescoes in the first part, here one was inclined to linger; here one took pleasure in going back and forth. The subjects were not so striking nor so diverse, but for that very reason encouraged one to explore their deep and quiet meaning. Also, the two strollers turned around at the end of the corridor, while Wilhelm expressed his concern that the pictures went only as far as the Last Supper and the Master's farewell from his disciples. He inquired after the remaining portion of the story.

"We are happy to extract from every lesson, from every tradition, what can properly be extracted," the eldest answered. "For only in that way can the concept of what is significant develop in young people. Life mixes and mingles everything together without regard; so here, too, we have completely separated the life of this remarkable man from its end. In his life he appears a true philosopher—do not be shocked by this term—as a sage in the highest sense. He holds steadfastly to his principles; he travels his road undismayed, and when he raises up the lowly and allows the ignorant, the poor, the sick, to share in his wisdom, his wealth, and his strength, and seems thereby to place himself on their level, he does not deny on the other hand his divine origin; he dares to claim equality to God, yes, even to proclaim himself God. In this manner he astounds those around him from his youth, wins a certain number of them over to his side, arouses the others against him, and shows all who aspire to a certain sublimity in life and principles what they may expect from the world. And so his progress through the world is more instructive and fruitful for the noble part of mankind than his death; for everyone is called to the former

tests, few to the latter. And in order that we may review everything that follows from this observation, consider the moving scene of the Last Supper. Here the sage, as always, is leaving his followers, utterly orphaned, behind, and while he cares for the good ones, he is at the same time feeding a traitor, who will destroy him and the better ones."

With these words the eldest opened a door, and Wilhelm was startled to find himself back in the first hall, by the entrance. They had, he now realized, made the entire circuit of the court. "I had hoped," said Wilhelm, "you would lead me to the end, and now you bring me back to the beginning." "For this time I can show you no more," said the eldest. "We do not let our pupils see any more, nor do we explain more than what you have just surveyed. Each can be instructed in the outward, commonly accessible aspect from childhood on, but the inward, spiritual and emotional aspect is conveyed only to those who have developed a certain reflectiveness. The rest, which is revealed but once a year, can be communicated only to those whom we release. As for that ultimate religion which springs from reverence for that which is beneath us, that worship of the repulsive, the hated, the shunned, we pass it along to each one merely as preparation for the world, that he may know where to find such a thing, should the need for it ever develop. I invite you to return after a year, to attend our school celebration and see how far your son has progressed. Then you, too, shall be initiated into the Sanctuary of Pain."

"Allow me one question," Wilhelm replied. "Have you, then, in addition to representing the life of this divine man as a lesson and example, also painted his suffering, his death, as a model of noble endurance?"

"By all means," said the eldest. "We make no mystery of this. But we draw a veil over his sufferings, precisely because we hold them in such respect. We consider it damnable impertinence to expose that martyr's scaffolding and the holy one suffering upon it to the gaze of the sun, which hid its face when a wicked world forced this spectacle upon it; it is a piece of insolence to play with, to trifle with, to make a show of these deep mysteries, in which the divine depths of suffering lie hidden, and to keep on until the most sacred matters appear commonplace and tasteless. For the time being, let this suffice to ease your mind about your son and to convince you that you will find him educated in some fashion, more or less, but certainly in a desirable way, and in any case not confused, vacillating, or unsteady."

Wilhelm hesitated, for he was gazing at the pictures in the entry hall and wished to have their meaning explicated. "This, too," said the eldest, "must be reserved for next year. We allow no outsiders to be present at the instruction we give the children in the meantime. But

come then and hear what our best lecturers judge useful to be spoken publicly about these subjects."

Shortly after this exchange they heard knocking at the little gate. The supervisor of the previous day announced his presence; he had brought Wilhelm's horse around, and so our friend took his leave of the Three, who in parting commended him to the supervisor as follows: "This man now numbers among the trusted, and you are aware what you are to reply to his questions. For surely he will wish to be instructed about much that he has seen and heard here. Measure and purpose are not hidden from you."

Wilhelm did indeed have other questions on his mind, which he now promptly posed. As they rode through the grounds, the children comported themselves as they had the previous day, but today he noticed, although infrequently, that one or another of the boys did not greet the supervisor as he rode by, did not look up from his work, and let him pass unnoticed. Wilhelm inquired about the reason for this, and what this exception might signify. The other responded, "It is in fact highly significant, for this is the most severe punishment we impose on the pupils: they are declared unworthy of manifesting reverence, and required to show themselves rude and uncultivated. But they do their best to escape from this situation and throw themselves at once into every task. Should, however, a child obstinately make no effort to redeem himself, he is sent back to his parents, with a brief but telling report. Anyone who does not learn how to obey the laws must leave the territory where they hold sway."

Today as yesterday, another sight aroused the wanderer's curiosity. It was the variety of color and cut in the pupils' clothing. It seemed not to be a question of rank, since boys who saluted differently were dressed alike, while those giving the same salutation were clothed differently. Wilhelm inquired as to the reason for this apparent contradiction. "The answer is," the supervisor replied, "that it is a means to discover the individual temperaments of the boys. Despite the general strictness and order that otherwise prevail, in this matter we allow a degree of personal choice. Within the limits of our supplies of fabric and trimmings, the pupils may take their favorite colors, and, again within reasonable constraints, choose the cut and form of their clothing. We observe their choices carefully, for the color reveals the way of thinking, while the cut reveals the way of living. Yet there is a peculiarity of human nature which makes it somewhat difficult to judge these things more accurately. It is the spirit of imitation, the tendency to affiliate oneself with others. It is very rare for a pupil to arrive at something that has not yet been tried; for the most part they choose something familiar, which they see before them. Yet even this observation is not without utility, for through such outward manifestations

they ally themselves with this or that party, they join this or that group, and so general attitudes become visible; we discover each child's inclination and the example to which he cleaves.

"There have been instances where the dispositions tended toward the general, where one style spread to all and every distinction was in danger of disappearing. We try by gentle means to check any such development; we let the supplies run out: this or that fabric, one or another trimming, is no more to be had. We substitute something new, something attractive, in its place. With bright colors and a short, snug cut we lure the bolder spirits, while with sober tones and comfortable, loose garments we appeal to the more circumspect, and thus gradually restore a balance.

"For we are completely opposed to uniforms. They conceal character and hide the children's unique qualities from the view of their instructors more than any other dissimulation."

Conversing on this and other topics, Wilhelm reached the border of the province, and in fact at the very spot where the wanderer was to leave it, according to his old friend's indications, to pursue his actual goal.

In saying farewell, the supervisor remarked that Wilhelm must now wait until the great festival was announced to all concerned, by a variety of means. All the parents were invited, and the proficient pupils were released into the freedom and contingencies of life. Then he would be able to tour the remaining sections of the province as he pleased, where, in suitable settings, the separate forms of instruction were imparted and practiced, each according to its own principles.

Chapter Three

To gratify the expectations of the worthy public, which for some time now has enjoyed taking its entertainment in small doses, we at first thought to offer the following tale in a number of installments. Its inner continuity, however, considered as to attitudes, emotions, and events, occasioned an uninterrupted presentation. May this latter fulfill its purpose and may it at the same time become evident, when the story is told, how the characters in this seemingly unconnected episode are intimately entwined with those others whom we already know and love.

The Man of Fifty Years

The major had ridden into the courtyard, and Hilarie, his niece, was already standing outside on the steps leading up to the manor house,

waiting to receive him. He scarcely recognized her, for she had again grown taller and more beautiful. She flew to him, he pressed her to his breast with the feelings of a father, and they hurried in to her mother.

He was equally welcome to the baroness, his sister, and when Hilarie hurried off to attend to breakfast, the major said happily, "This time I may be brief, and report that our business is concluded. Our brother, the marshal, now recognizes that he can handle neither his tenants nor his stewards. He will convey his property in his own lifetime to us and our children; to be sure, the annual allowance that he stipulates for himself is large; but it is within our means. We are still gaining a good deal for the present and everything for the future. The new arrangement is to be settled soon. Since I expect my discharge at any moment, I shall take an active role again, which can bring decided advantages to us and our children. We look calmly on while they grow up, and it is up to us, and to them, to hasten their union."

"That would be all very well," the baroness replied, "if I did not have a secret to reveal to you, of which I myself have only just become aware. Hilarie's heart is no longer free; in that regard your son has little or nothing to hope for."

"What are you saying?" the major exclaimed. "Is it possible? When we are taking such pains to make financial provision for them, would inclination play us such a trick? Tell me, my dear, tell me quickly: who can have captured Hilarie's heart? Or is it really that serious? Might it not be a fleeting impression, which one may hope to extinguish again?"

"You must first think a bit and guess," answered the baroness, thereby increasing his impatience. This had reached its height when the entrance of Hilarie with the servants bringing breakfast made a quick solution of the riddle impossible.

The major himself felt that he was seeing the lovely girl with other eyes than shortly before. It was almost as if he were jealous of the lucky man whose image could have impressed itself upon so lovely a soul. Breakfast did not taste good to him, and he failed to notice that everything was prepared exactly as he liked it and normally requested.

With the major so taciturn and constrained, Hilarie herself almost lost her merry air. The baroness felt discomfited, and drew her daughter to the piano, but her spirited and expressive playing elicited scarcely any applause from the major. He wished both the lovely girl and the breakfast gone, the sooner the better, and the baroness was obliged to rise from the table and suggest to her brother a stroll in the garden.

No sooner were they alone than the major urgently repeated his earlier question, to which his sister after a pause replied with a smile,

"If you wish to find the lucky man whom she loves, you need not go far. He is very close by. It is you she loves."

The major was taken aback, then exclaimed, "It would be a very untimely joke if you wished to persuade me of something which, if true, would make me both embarrassed and unhappy. For although I need time to recover from my amazement, I can see at a glance how greatly our situation would be upset by such an unexpected occurrence. The only thing that consoles me is the belief that inclinations of this kind are illusory, that they are based upon self-deception, and that a sound and good soul will soon recover from such a mistake, either on its own, or with the assistance of sensible friends."

"I am not of your opinion," said the baroness, "because to judge by all the symptoms, it is a very serious feeling with which Hilarie is filled."

"I would never have imagined such a natural disposition capable of something so unnatural," the major remarked.

"It is not all that unnatural," his sister replied. "From my own girlhood I can recall a passion for a man older than you. You are fifty; that is no great age for a German, if perhaps other, livelier nations age more quickly."

"But how do you justify your suspicion?" the major asked.

"It is not a suspicion, it is a certainty. You shall learn the particulars by and by."

Hilarie joined them, and the major found his feelings, against his will, altered once again. Her presence seemed dearer and more precious to him than before; her manner appeared more loving, and he was already beginning to lend credence to his sister's words. The sensation was very pleasant, although he was inclined neither to admit it nor indulge it. To be sure, Hilarie was most charming, as her manner toward him combined the delicate shyness due a lover with the easy familiarity due an uncle. For she truly loved him, with her entire being. The garden was in its full spring glory, and the major, seeing so many old trees leafing out anew, could believe in a similar return of his own springtime. And who would not have been seduced into such thoughts in the presence of such a charming girl!

Thus they passed the day together; the various domestic rituals were carried out with greatest good cheer. In the evening, after dinner, Hilarie again sat down at the piano. The major listened with different ears than in the morning. One melody intertwined with another, one song flowed into the next, and even the arrival of midnight could hardly induce the little company to disband.

When the major reached his chamber, he found everything arranged for his comfort in the old, familiar manner; some engravings, before which he liked to linger, had even been moved here from other rooms.

With his awareness sharpened, he saw how he was being cared for and coddled, down to the smallest detail.

That night he needed but a few hours' sleep; his vital energies were roused early. But he now perceived all of a sudden that a new order of things brings many inconveniences in its train. His old orderly, who acted both as manservant and valet, had heard not a sharp word for several years, since everything was done in its accustomed way according to a rigid order. Horses were looked after and articles of clothing cleaned at the proper times. But today the master had awakened earlier, and nothing seemed to suit him.

Added to this was another circumstance, which increased the major's impatience and even ill humor. In the past, he had found no fault with himself or his servant. Now, however, stepping before the mirror, he did not find himself as he would have liked. He could not deny that there were gray hairs, and a few wrinkles had turned up as well. He scrubbed and powdered more than usual, but in the end he had to let it be. Nor was he satisfied with his clothing or its cleanliness. He claimed to find lint on his jacket and dust on his boots. The old servant did not know what to say, and was astonished to see his master so changed.

Despite all these hindrances, the major was out in the garden early enough. He had hoped to find Hilarie there, and so indeed he did. She came toward him with a nosegay, and he dared not kiss her as usual and press her to his heart. He found himself in the most delightful discomposure, and yielded to his feelings without thinking where they might lead.

The baroness also put in an early appearance and, showing her brother a note just brought by messenger, exclaimed, "You will never guess whose visit this note announces!" "Well, do not keep me in suspense," the major replied, and he learned that an old actor friend was passing not far from the estate and proposed to stop in briefly.

"I am curious to see him again," the major said. "He is no longer young, yet I hear that he still plays the youthful parts."

"He must be ten years older than you," the baroness replied.

"Certainly," the major answered, "from all I remember."

It was not long before a vigorous, trim, attractive man approached. There was a moment of hesitation at first. But very soon the friends recognized one another, and reminiscences of every sort enlivened the conversation. These gave way to stories, to questions, and accounts of the intervening years. They made one another acquainted with their present circumstances, and soon felt as though they had never been apart.

A secret source tells us that in earlier years this man, then a very handsome and attractive youth, had had the fortune or the misfortune

to please a distinguished lady. As a result he found himself in great embarrassment and danger, from which the major happily rescued him at the very moment when he was threatened with a most sorry fate. He had always remained grateful to the brother and to the sister as well, for it was she who, by warning him in time, had put him on guard.

For a while before luncheon the men were left alone together. Not without admiration, indeed almost with astonishment, the major had inspected the outward appearance of his old friend, in general and in detail. He seemed not to have changed at all, and it was no wonder that he could still appear on the stage as a young lover.

"You are inspecting me more intently than is proper," he finally said to the major. "I greatly fear that you find me all too different from the old days."

"By no means," replied the major, "rather I am astonished to find your appearance fresher and younger than mine. For I know that you were a grown man when I, with the boldness of a foolhardy stripling, came to your aid in a certain extremity."

"It is your own fault," the other replied. "It is the fault of all your kind, and although you ought not to be scolded for it, you are nonetheless to be blamed. You think only of what is essential; you want to be, not to seem. That is perfectly fine, so long as you are something. But when finally the essence begins to depart along with the appearance, and appearance proves even more evanescent than essence, then one notices that it would have done no harm not to neglect the outward aspect of life entirely in favor of the inward."

"You are right," the major said, and could hardly suppress a sigh.

"Perhaps not entirely right," the aged youth countered. "In my profession, to be sure, it would be quite unforgivable not to keep up one's appearance as long as possible. But you others have reason to concentrate on other things that are more significant and more lasting."

"Still, there are occasions," the major said, "when one feels inwardly fresh and would very much like to freshen oneself up outwardly as well."

Since the visitor could not guess the major's true frame of mind, he took these words in the military sense and launched into a lengthy disquisition on the importance of outward appearances in the military, commenting how the officer who had to devote so much care to his clothing might also devote some attention to his skin and hair.

"For example, it is inexcusable," he went on, "that your temples are already gray, that wrinkles are forming here and there, and that your hair is growing thin. Look at me, old fellow that I am! See how well-preserved I am, and this without any witch's arts, and with far less

care and effort than people expend daily to harm themselves or at least to bore themselves."

The major found this chance conversation too much to his advantage to break it off quickly, yet he went at the question delicately and with caution, even though he was dealing with an old acquaintance. "Unfortunately I have missed my chance," he exclaimed, "and the damage cannot be repaired. I must simply resign myself on this score, and you must not think any the worse of me for that."

"No chance has been missed," rejoined the other. "If only you serious-minded men were not so rigid and stiff, so quick to label as vain anyone who thinks about his appearance, and in the process ruin your own pleasure at being in attractive company and yourself being attractive."

"Even if there is no magic," the major said with a smile, "in the way you others keep yourselves young, still it involves some mystery, or at any rate secrets of the kind often touted in the newspapers, the best of which, however, you know how to ferret out."

"Whether you are joking or speaking in earnest," his friend replied, "you have hit the mark. Among the many things that have been tried through the ages to sustain our appearance, which often falters much sooner than our mind, there are some truly priceless substances, some simple, others complex mixtures. I obtained them from fellow actors, for money or by chance, and I have tested them on myself. I use them faithfully and shall continue to, without, however, abandoning my researches. This much I can tell you, and I am not exaggerating: I carry with me a dressing case beyond price, a casket whose effects I would gladly try on you, if we could but spend a fortnight together."

The thought that something of this sort was possible and that this possibility had chanced to come his way at just the right moment so lifted the major's spirits that he already looked fresher and more energetic. Cheered by the hope that he could bring his head and face into harmony with his heart, and animated by impatience to learn what must be done, he seemed quite another man at dinner. He received Hilarie's gracious attentions calmly, and looked at her with a degree of confidence that had still been altogether foreign to him that morning.

Since his actor friend was skilled at maintaining, stimulating, and heightening the good humor of the company with his reminiscences, anecdotes, and witty sallies, the major was greatly disconcerted when he threatened to leave and be on his way right after dinner. The major tried every means to prolong his stay, at least overnight, urgently promising fresh horses and the relay for the morning. In short, the restorative dressing case was not to leave the house until more had been learned of its contents and their application.

The major was well aware that there was no time to be lost and thus sought to speak privately with his old protégé right after dinner. Since he lacked the courage to go straight to the point, he approached it obliquely by returning to their previous conversation; for his part, he declared, he would gladly pay more attention to his outward appearance, were it not that others promptly concluded that anyone seen making such efforts was vain, and respected his moral being the less, the more they felt compelled to admire his physical being.

"Do not vex me with such talk," replied his friend. "These are phrases society has adopted without reflection, or, if one takes a harsher view, by which it expresses its hostile and malicious nature. If you examine it closely: what is this, after all, that is often decried as vanity? Everyone ought to delight in himself, and fortunate is he who does so. But if he does, how can he keep from showing this pleasant feeling? Why should he, in the midst of life, conceal that he delights in being alive? If polite society—for that alone is at issue here—frowned upon such manifestations only when they became too pronounced, when one man's delight in himself and his being interfered with the delight others might take and want to display, there could be no objection, and no doubt the blame originally arose from such excess. But what is the point of strange, severe strictures against the inevitable? Why not permit and tolerate conduct that one more or less allows oneself from time to time? In fact, polite society could not even exist without it, for the pleasure one takes in oneself and the desire to share this self-esteem with others makes one pleasing, the sense of one's own charm makes one charming. Would to heaven that all people were vain, but consciously so, in moderation and in the proper spirit. Then we in the cultivated world would be the happiest of people. Women, it is said, are vain from birth; but it becomes them, and they please us all the better for it. How can a young man shape himself if he is not vain? An empty, hollow character will at least know how to give himself some outward polish, while the man of parts will soon form himself from the outside inward. As for myself, I have reason to think myself the most fortunate of men, because my profession entitles me to be vain, and because the more I am so, the more I add to others' enjoyment. I am praised where others are blamed, and on this very score have the right and the good fortune to delight and enchant the public at an age at which others are compelled to leave the stage, or else stay on, but ignominiously."

The major heard these remarks out with scant pleasure. The little word "vanity," when he introduced it, was meant only to serve as a bridge to lead his friend smoothly to his own request. Now he was afraid that further discussion would displace the goal even more, and so he pressed directly to the issue. "As for me," he said, "I would be

not at all disinclined to enlist under your banner, since you think that it is not too late, and that I can to some extent compensate for my past negligence. Share some of your tinctures, pomades, and salves with me, and I will make the attempt."

"Sharing these things," the other man replied, "is more difficult than you think. For example, it is not just a matter of pouring a certain amount from my vials and leaving you half of the best ingredients in my dressing case. The application is the chief difficulty. One cannot simply make these inherited substances one's own. How this one or that one fits, under what conditions, in what order they are to be used: all that requires practice and thought. In fact, even these may do no good, if one does not have an inborn talent for this particular undertaking."

"You would like, it appears," the major replied, "to retreat now. You are raising difficulties in order to rescue your rather fanciful assertions. You do not wish to give me a pretext, an opportunity, to put your words to the test."

"Your raillery, my friend," replied the other, "would not induce me to gratify your wish, had I not such good intentions toward you; I, indeed, made the offer first. Consider, my friend, that a person takes special pleasure in winning converts, in bringing to light in others, outside of himself, that which he values in himself, in having them enjoy what he enjoys, in finding himself and mirroring himself in them. In truth, even if this is egotism, it is the most lovable and laudable sort, the kind that has made us human and keeps us human. This, apart from the friendship I bear you, is the impulse behind my desire to make you a disciple in the art of rejuvenation. But because no master would want to train bunglers, I am at a loss as to how to begin. As I said before, neither the ointments nor any instructions are sufficient; the application cannot be taught in general terms. For your sake and for the joy of propagating my teachings, I am prepared for any sacrifice. I shall offer you at once the greatest I can for the moment: I will leave my servant with you. He is a sort of valet and a jack-of-all-trades, who, though he does not know how to concoct everything, is not initiated into every secret, still understands the entire treatment quite well and for the beginning will be of great use to you, until you have worked your way far enough in that I may reveal to you the higher secrets."

"What!" cried the major, "You have steps and grades in your art of rejuvenation? You have secrets even for the initiates?"

"Most certainly," the other replied. "It would be a sorry art that could be grasped all at once, and whose farthest reaches could be seen at once by one who first crossed its threshold."

Without more delay the servant was assigned to the major, who promised to treat him well. The baroness had to provide little boxes, canisters, and jars, for what purpose she knew not. Portions were doled out, and the men stayed together into the night, amid cheerful and spirited conversations. With the later rising of the moon, the guest drove off, promising to return after some interval.

The major was rather tired when he reached his chamber. He had risen early, had not spared himself during the day, and was eager to get to bed. He found not one servant waiting for him, however, but two. His old orderly speedily undressed him in the usual way. But now the new man came forward and gave him to understand that the proper time for applying rejuvenation and beauty preparations was the night, for their efficacy was greatest during peaceful sleep. Consequently the major had to submit to having his head salved, his face smeared, his eyebrows oiled, and his lips dabbed. Furthermore, various rituals were also required. He could not even put on his nightcap directly; instead, he had to have a net first, if not a soft leather cap!

The major lay down in bed with an unpleasant sensation, which, however, he had no time to define for himself, for he soon fell asleep. But if we may speak for his inner self, he felt rather like a mummy, a cross between a patient and an embalmed corpse. Yet the sweet image of Hilarie, surrounded by the brightest hopes, drew him quickly into refreshing slumber.

In the morning his orderly was on hand at the proper hour. Everything pertaining to the master's dress lay in the accustomed order on the chairs, and the major was just about to get out of bed when the new valet entered and protested vigorously against such haste. One must linger in bed, one must take one's time, if the undertaking was to succeed, if one was to reap the benefits of so much care and trouble. The master was then informed that he was to get up somewhat later, partake of a small breakfast, and then step into a bath that was already waiting. The directives could not be avoided; they had to be obeyed, and several hours were consumed by these activities.

The major shortened the rest period after the bath, and thought he would quickly throw on his clothes, for he was expeditious by nature, and moreover was eager to see Hilarie. But once again the new servant intervened, and made it clear to him that he must unlearn his habit of efficiency. Whatever one did must be carried out at a slow, comfortable pace, but especially the time for dressing should be regarded as a pleasant hour of communing with oneself.

The servant's ministrations corresponded exactly to his words. As a result, the major had the impression he really was better dressed than ever before when he stepped before the mirror and saw himself so smartly turned out. Without asking, the valet had even altered the

major's uniform to bring it more up to date; he had spent the night on this transformation. Such an immediately visible rejuvenation put the major in a very cheerful state of mind; he felt refreshed both inwardly and outwardly, and with impatient longing hurried down to join his family.

He found his sister standing before the family tree, which she had had hung up, prompted by conversation the previous evening about various collateral relations, who, because they were unmarried, or had gone to live in distant lands, or had even totally disappeared, raised in greater or lesser degree the hope of large legacies either for brother and sister or for their children. They discussed the question for some time, without mentioning the fact that previously all family worries and endeavors had focused solely on their children. Hilarie's inclination had changed the entire picture, and yet at this moment neither the major nor his sister wished to consider the matter further.

The baroness withdrew, and the major remained alone before this laconic family portrait. Hilarie approached him, and leaning against him in childlike fashion, gazed at the chart and asked him whom of all these people he had known and who might be alive and still left.

The major began his account with the oldest ones, whom he remembered but dimly from his childhood. Then he went on, sketched the character of various fathers, the ways in which their children resembled or differed from them, observed that a grandfather often re-emerged in a grandson, spoke as the occasion warranted of the influence of the women, who, marrying in from other families, often altered the character of entire lines. He praised the deeds of many a forefather and more distant relative, without concealing their faults. He passed over in silence those of whom there was cause to be ashamed. Finally he reached the bottommost rows. There were his brother the marshal, himself and his sister, and beneath them his son, with Hilarie next to him.

"These two certainly look each other directly in the face," said the major, and did not add what he had in mind. After a pause, Hilarie replied timidly, in a low voice and almost with a sigh, "And yet one will never reproach a person who gazes upward!" At the same time, she looked up at him with eyes in which her entire affection was expressed.

"Do I understand you rightly?" the major said, as he turned toward her.

"I can say nothing," Hilarie answered with a smile, "that you do not already know."

"You make me the happiest man under the sun!" the major exclaimed, and fell at her feet. "Will you be mine?"

"In God's name, stand up! I am yours forever."

The baroness entered. Without being surprised, she nevertheless started. "If this should turn out badly," the major said, "the fault is yours. If well, we shall be forever grateful to you."

The baroness had loved her brother since childhood so much that she had thought him superior to all other men, and perhaps even Hilarie's inclination had, if not sprung directly from this preference of her mother's, surely been fostered by it. All three were now joined in one love, one delight, and blissful hours sped by for them. But finally they became aware once more of the world around them, a world seldom in harmony with such sentiments.

Now they remembered the major's son. Hilarie had been destined for him, as he well knew. Upon concluding the agreement with the marshal, the major was supposed to visit his son in his garrison, to discuss everything and bring these matters to a happy conclusion. But now an unexpected occurrence had disrupted the entire situation; circumstances which in the past had fit together in such friendly fashion now seemed hostile, and it was difficult to predict what turn the affair would take, or what sort of mood might seize their spirits.

Meanwhile the major had to bestir himself to go see his son, to whom he had already announced his coming. Not without reluctance, not without foreboding, not without pain at leaving Hilarie, even for a short time, he set off, after considerable delay, leaving his orderly and his horses behind and accompanied only by his rejuvenation attendant, whom he could no longer do without. He made for the town where his son was stationed.

After so long a separation, father and son greeted each other and embraced most warmly. They had a great deal to say to each other, yet did not at once speak of what lay closest to their hearts. The son dwelt upon his hopes for a speedy promotion. The father in turn gave him a detailed report on what the elder members of the family had negotiated and settled with respect to the family fortune, the various estates, and the rest.

The conversation had begun to falter to some degree when the son plucked up his courage and said to his father with a smile, "You are treating me very gently, dear Father, and I thank you for it. You speak of holdings and fortunes and do not mention the condition under which these shall become mine, at least in part. You hold back Hilarie's name, waiting for me to utter it myself and express my desire to be united soon with the lovable child."

At these words of his son the major was in great confusion. But since he was disposed, partly by nature, partly by old habit, to feel out the disposition of the person with whom he was dealing, he said nothing and looked at his son with an ambiguous smile.

"You cannot guess, Father, what I have to tell you," the lieutenant continued, "and I shall speak my piece quickly once and for all. I can depend on your kindness, for I am sure that, having taken so many pains on my account, you have surely had my true happiness in mind. But it must be said, and so let it be said now: Hilarie cannot make me happy! I think of Hilarie as a charming relative, whom I should like to have as a dear friend all my life. But another woman has aroused my passion, has captured my heart. This inclination is irresistible; you will not condemn me to unhappiness, I know."

Only with difficulty did the major conceal the joy that wanted to light up his face. He asked his son with gentle earnestness who this person might be who could so utterly enslave him?

"You must see this creature for yourself, Father, for she is as indescribable as she is incomprehensible. I fear only that you yourself will be enraptured by her, as is everyone who comes near her. By God, I may yet see you as the rival of your son."

"Who is she, then?" the major asked. "If you are not able to convey her personality, then at least tell me something of her outward circumstances, for these are surely easier to state."

"Gladly, Father," the son replied, "though even these outward circumstances would be different if it were anyone else, and would have a different effect on another. She is a young widow, heiress to a rich old husband who died recently—she is independent and well fitted to be so, is surrounded by many, is loved by equally many, and courted by equally many, and yet, if I do not much deceive myself, has given her heart to me."

Confidently, since his father said nothing and gave no sign of disapproval, the son continued, recounting the fair widow's conduct toward him, extolling her irresistible charms, her delicate signs of favor toward him, one by one, in all of which his father of course recognized the easy complaisance of a universally sought-after woman, who always chooses some favorite among her many suitors without wholly committing herself to him. Under any other circumstances the major would surely have tried to point out to a son, even to a friend, that most likely self-deception was involved here. But in this case so much was at stake for him personally, if his son were not deceived and the widow were really to love him and decide as soon as possible in his favor, that he either felt no concern or thrust any such doubt from him, or perhaps merely kept it to himself.

"You are placing me in great embarrassment," began the father after a pause. "The entire agreement among the surviving members of our family rests on the assumption that you will be united with Hilarie. If she marries a stranger, then the whole fine and clever consolidation of a respectable fortune is shattered, and you especially will not be

well provided for. To be sure, there might still be a way out, but one that sounds rather strange, and one by which you still would not gain much: old as I am, I would have to marry Hilarie, which could scarcely make you very happy."

"It would make me happier than anything else in the world!" exclaimed the lieutenant. "For who can feel a genuine passion, who can enjoy or hope for the happiness of love without wishing the same supreme happiness to every friend, to everyone dear to him! You are not old, Father; and how charming Hilarie is! and the very notion of offering her your hand testifies that your heart is still youthful, your courage still intact. Let us think through and work out this inspiration, this spontaneous suggestion of yours. For I could be truly happy only if I knew you were happy; then I could truly rejoice that you were so well and richly rewarded for the concern you have shown for my future. Only then could I take you to see my fair lady bravely, confidently, and with a truly open heart. You will approve of my feelings, because you feel similarly; you will place nothing in the way of a son's happiness because you go to meet your own happiness."

With these and other insistent words the son left the father no opportunity for the reservations he would have liked to interject, but hurried him off to the fair widow, whom they found in a large, well appointed house, engaged in conversation with a company not numerous but select. She was one of those feminine beings no man can resist. With incredible skill she made the major the hero of the evening. The rest of the company seemed to be her family, the major alone the guest. She knew his circumstances well, and yet could ask about them as though only he could give a proper account of them. Similarly, each of the guests had to show some sort of interest in the new arrival. One of the gentlemen had to have known his brother, another his estates, and the third something else again, so that the major always felt himself the center of the lively conversation. Also, he was seated next to the lovely lady; her eyes were upon him, her smile directed toward him. In short, he found himself so much at ease that he almost forgot the reason for his coming. Moreover, she barely mentioned his son at all, though the young man took a lively part in the conversation. As far as she was concerned, today he seemed to be there, like all the others, only for the sake of his father.

A woman's needlework, begun in public, and continued with seeming unconcern, can, through cleverness and grace, acquire considerable significance. Pursued unself-consciously and diligently, such efforts make a beautiful woman seem oblivious to those around her, and thus arouse in them a secret uneasiness. But then, as if she were just waking up, a word or a glance brings her back into the circle, and she seems newly welcomed. But if she lays her work down in her lap, and attends

to a story someone is telling, or to an instructive discourse, of the sort men are so prone to give, it is highly flattering to the person she thus favors.

Our fair widow was working in such fashion on a splendid yet tasteful portfolio, which was, moreover, remarkable for its generous dimensions. This object was now discussed by the whole company, picked up by her nearest neighbor and passed around amidst effusive praise, while the artist herself talked of serious subjects with the major. An old habitué of the house went into raptures over the almost finished object. But when it was finally passed to the major, the lady seemed to want to keep it from him, as though it were not worthy of his attention, whereupon he found courteous words for the quality of the workmanship, while the other man claimed to see in it a never completed Penelopean project.

The guests strolled about the rooms and chatted in random groupings. The lieutenant approached the lady and asked her, "What do you say to my father?"

Smiling, she replied, "I think you might well take him for a model. Just see how well-dressed he is! And does he not carry himself and take care of himself better than his dear son!" She continued thus, praising the father to the detriment of his son, and evoking very mixed feelings of satisfaction and jealousy in the young man's heart.

Shortly afterward the son joined his father and told him what the widow had said, down to the smallest particular. The major's behavior toward the widow became even more cordial, and she assumed an even more lively and confidential tone toward him. In short, it may be said that when the time for departure came, the major already belonged to her and her circle just as much as all the others.

A heavy downpour prevented the guests from returning home as they had come. Some carriages drove up, into which those who had arrived on foot were distributed. The lieutenant, however, on the pretext that it was already too crowded, let his father be driven off, while he remained behind.

Back in his chamber, the major felt a kind of giddiness and inner uncertainty, such as overtakes someone precipitated from one situation into its opposite. The ground seems to move beneath the feet of one who disembarks from a ship, and light dances before the eyes of one who suddenly steps into darkness. In this wise, the major still felt himself surrounded by the presence of the lovely creature. He longed to see her still, to hear her, to see her again, to hear her again, and after some reflection he forgave his son and even considered him fortunate in being able to claim to possess a woman of such remarkable qualities.

He was jolted out of these feelings by his son, who burst rapturously in at the door, embraced his father, and exulted, "I am the happiest man on earth!" After these and similar exclamations, matters were finally clarified between the two. The father remarked that the lovely woman had not so much as mentioned the son in her conversation with him.

"That is simply her delicate, silent, half silent, half allusive manner, which makes you certain your wishes have been fulfilled, yet leaves you still in doubt. That is how she has been toward me up to now, but your presence, Father, has wrought a miracle. I gladly confess that I stayed behind solely to see her for another moment. I found her walking up and down through her brightly lit rooms. For I know it is her custom that when the guests depart no lights may be extinguished. She walks up and down alone in her enchanted salons when the spirits she summoned there are dismissed. She accepted the pretext under which I had returned. She spoke graciously, though of insignificant things. We walked up and down through open doors the whole length of the suite. Several times we had reached the last room of all, the little cabinet lit only by a dim lamp. If she was beautiful as she moved beneath the chandeliers, she was infinitely more so illuminated by the gentle light of the lamp. We had come there again, and before turning around stood still for a moment. I do not know how I found the audacity, I do not know how I could have dared in the midst of the most insignificant conversation suddenly to seize her hand, to kiss that delicate hand, to press it to my heart. It was not drawn away. 'Heavenly creature,' I cried, 'conceal yourself from me no longer! If your lovely heart has any inclination for the happy man who stands here before you, veil it no longer, reveal it, admit it. This is the best, the ideal time to do so! Banish me, or take me into your arms!'

"I do not know what all I said, I know not what I did. She did not withdraw, she did not resist, she did not reply. I dared to take her in my arms and ask whether she would be mine. I kissed her wildly; she pushed me away. 'Yes, yes,' she murmured, or something of the sort, as if bewildered. I started off, and called, 'I shall send my father; he will speak on my behalf.'—'Not a word to him about this,' she replied, following me a few more steps. 'Go away, forget what has just taken place.'"

What the major thought, we do not wish to enlarge upon. But to his son he said, "What do you think should be done now? As I see it, the issue has been adequately introduced, on the spur of the moment, so that we can go to work on a more formal basis. It is perhaps very appropriate for me to call tomorrow and ask for her hand for you."

"In God's name, Father," he exclaimed, "that would ruin the whole thing! That demeanor, that tone must not be disrupted, thrown out of

tune, by any formality. It is enough, Father, that your presence has hastened this union, without your having to say a word. Yes, it is you to whom I owe my happiness! The respect my beloved feels for you has overcome her every doubt, and the son would never have found such a happy moment, had his father not prepared the ground."

This and similar communications occupied them far into the night. They agreed upon their plans: the major would make a parting call on the widow, purely for form's sake, and then go back to arrange his union with Hilarie. The son would further and hasten his own to whatever extent possible.

Chapter Four

Our major paid a morning call on the fair widow, in order to take his leave from her and, if it were possible, discreetly further his son's cause. He found her in elegant morning attire, and in the company of an older woman, who immediately won him by her highly proper and amiable manner. The charm of the younger woman was admirably balanced by the propriety of the elder, and their conduct toward one another certainly seemed to suggest that they were related.

The younger woman seemed to have just completed the portfolio familiar to us from yesterday. For after the customary greetings and courteous words of welcome, she turned to her companion and handed her the intricate work, as if reverting to an interrupted conversation: "So you see, I have finished it after all, although it did not look like it, with all these hesitations and delays."

"You have come at just the right moment, Major," the older lady said, "to settle our quarrel, or at least to declare yourself for one party or the other. I maintain that no one begins such an elaborate piece of work without having someone in mind for whom it is intended, and that no one finishes it without some such intent. Examine for yourself this work of art, for I may justly call it that, and say whether something of this sort can be undertaken without any purpose at all."

Naturally our major had to commend the work most warmly. Partly plaited, partly embroidered, it excited, along with admiration, desire to know how it was made. Colored silks predominated, but gold had also not been spared. In brief, one hardly knew what to admire more, its splendor or its good taste.

"There is still a bit left to do," remarked the fair widow, as she untied the ribbons that held it together and busied herself with the interior. "I do not want to quarrel," she continued, "but I should like to tell you how I feel during such work. As young girls we become

accustomed to being precise with our fingers and to letting our thoughts wander. Both habits remain with us, as we gradually learn to complete the most intricate and delicate work, and I will not deny that I have always attached to each work of this sort thoughts of people, of situations, of joy and sorrow. And so a project once begun became dear to me, and the finished article, I may well say, precious. As such the humblest piece had some significance, the simplest of projects assumed worth, and the most challenging had more only because the memories bound up with it were richer and more complete. Thus I always felt I could offer such items to friends and loved ones, or to respected and eminent people. They recognized this, too, and knew that I was presenting them with some part of my self, which, though multifaceted and ineffable, was, when embodied in a pleasing gift, gladly received as a friendly greeting."

Such a charming confession, to be sure, hardly left room for an answer. Still, the companion was able to reply with some well-turned words. The major, however, who had long treasured the graceful wisdom of Roman writers and poets and had committed their luminous formulations to memory, recalled several lines that would have been fitting here, but took care not to recite them or even mention them, lest he seem a pedant. Not to appear tongue-tied and lacking in wit, however, he attempted on the spur of the moment a paraphrase in prose, which, however, was not very successful, with the result that the conversation almost came to a halt.

The older lady therefore reached for a book she had put down at the arrival of the caller. It was a collection of poems with which the two friends had just been occupied. This provided an opportunity to speak of the art of poetry, but the discussion did not long remain general, for the ladies soon admitted confidently that they were informed of the major's poetic talents. His son, who did not conceal his own aspirations to the honorable title of poet, had spoken to them of his father's poems and even recited a few, his underlying purpose being to adorn himself with a poetic legacy and, as is youth's wont, discreetly portray himself as advancing and surpassing the abilities of his father. But the major, who sought to retreat, since he wished to be known simply as a man of letters and a dilettante, sought, since no escape was left to him, at least to dodge the attack by characterizing the type of poetry at which he had tried his hand as second-rate and almost spurious. He could not deny that he had made some attempts at what has been called descriptive and, in a certain sense, didactic verse.

The ladies, especially the younger one, championed this type of poetry, saying, "If we want to live reasonably and calmly, which is, ultimately, everyone's wish and intention, what use have we for hustle and bustle which arbitrarily stirs us up without giving us anything,

which makes us restless, only to abandon us to ourselves after all. Since I, for my part, would not willingly dispense with poetry, I find immeasurably more pleasant poems that transport me into serene regions, where I seem to rediscover myself, and make me feel the deep value of the simple pastoral life; they lead me through bushy groves to the forest, and imperceptibly to a height overlooking a lake, where, on the other side, first cultivated hills, then more distant tree-covered slopes, and finally blue mountains would form a satisfying picture. When all of this is offered to me in clear rhythm and rhyme, I on my sofa am grateful that the poet has evoked a picture in my imagination that I can enjoy with more tranquility than if I had actually set eyes on it after a fatiguing hike, and possibly under other adverse circumstances."

The major, who saw the present conversation merely as a means to further his ends, tried to turn again to lyric poetry, in which his son's achievements were truly commendable. The ladies did not precisely contradict him, but sought to divert him jokingly from the path on which he had embarked, especially since he seemed to be alluding to passionate poems with which his son had attempted to express, not without force and skill, his steadfast devotion to the incomparable lady. "I do not care for poems by lovers," said the fair one, "whether read aloud or sung. Happy lovers arouse our envy before we know it, and the unhappy ones are always tedious."

At this, the older woman took up the conversation. Turning to her lovely friend, she remarked, "Why do we digress so much, and waste time on formalities toward a person we honor and love? Should we not confide to him that we have already had the pleasure of becoming partly acquainted with that delightful poem of his which presents the gallant passion for the hunt in all its particulars, and ask him not to withhold the rest of it from us? Your son," she continued, "has recited various sections from memory with enthusiasm, and made us curious to see how it fits together."

When the father wished to return once again to his son's talents and underscore them, the ladies made this impossible by interpreting it as an obvious stratagem for indirectly refusing to fulfill their request. Nor did he escape until he had promised unconditionally to send them the poem. After this, the conversation took a turn that hindered him from saying any more on his son's behalf, especially since the latter had advised against any importunities.

Since it seemed time for him to take his leave, and our friend made gestures in that direction, the pretty widow said with a sort of embarrassment, which only increased her loveliness, as she carefully straightened the freshly tied bow of the portfolio, "Poets and lovers have long had the reputation, alas, that their promises and assurances

are not very trustworthy; forgive me, therefore, if I dare to cast doubt on the word of a man of honor and, instead of requiring a pledge or earnest money from you, rather give you one of my own. Take this portfolio; it has some resemblance to your hunting poem: many memories are attached to it, and much time went into its making, and now it is finally completed. Use it as a courier to deliver your delightful work to us."

The major was deeply touched by this unexpected offering. The delicate splendor of the gift had so little relation to what usually surrounded him, to the other things he used, that even when it was proffered, he could hardly take possession of it. However, he collected himself, and since his memory never lacked for some traditional gem, a classical passage sprang instantly to mind. To quote it would have been pedantic, but he was inspired to improvise a clever paraphrase, combining cordial thanks with a delicate compliment. And so the scene ended in a manner gratifying to all the participants.

He thus saw himself, not without embarrassment, involved in a pleasant relationship. He had agreed, had promised to send the poem, to write. If the circumstances seemed to some degree displeasing, he nevertheless had to consider it fortunate that he should maintain pleasant relations with a lady who, with all her remarkable qualities, was to be so closely tied to him. He took his leave, therefore, not without some inner satisfaction, for how should a poet not feel encouraged when the fruit of his assiduous labor, which has lain for so long unnoticed, receives quite unexpectedly kindly attention.

Upon his return to his quarters, the major sat down to write to his good sister and inform her of everything. As was only natural, his description bore traces of a certain exaltation that he himself was experiencing, heightened moreover by the periodic interruptions of his son.

The letter made a very mixed impression on the baroness. Even though the situation, which seemed to promote and hasten the union of her brother with Hilarie, ought to have satisfied her completely, she did not care for the fair widow, although she would not have bothered to analyze the reasons. On this occasion we make the following observation:

A man should never confide his enthusiasm for any woman to another one. They know each other too well to feel themselves worthy of such exclusive adoration. In their view, men are like customers in a shop, where the shopkeeper has the advantage of knowing his wares, and can take the opportunity to present them in the best light. The customer, by contrast, always enters the shop with a kind of innocence. He needs the wares, wants them, and thinks them desirable, but seldom knows how to examine them with expert eyes. The former knows full

well what he is offering, but the latter not always what he is receiving. But this is one of those elements in human life and society that cannot be changed; indeed, it is as praiseworthy as it is necessary, since all our wishing and wooing, all our buying and trading, depends upon it.

Guided by instinct more than reflection, the baroness could feel entirely satisfied neither with the passion of the son nor with the favorable account of the father. The happy turn of events took her by surprise, but a premonition based on the double disparity in ages could not be dismissed. Hilarie is too young for her brother, the widow not young enough for the major's son. Nevertheless, the affair has begun its course, and cannot be halted. A devout wish that all might go well vented itself in a gentle sigh. To ease her heart, she took up her pen and wrote to a friend already known to us, wise in human affairs. Having filled in the history, she wrote as follows:

"This sort of young, seductive widow is not unfamiliar to me. She seems to shun female company and tolerates about her only a woman who can do her no damage, who flatters her and, should her unspoken qualities fail to shine forth clearly enough, knows how to call attention to them with words and skillful management. The audience and the participants for such a performance must be men; thence arises the necessity of attracting men and holding them fast. I think no ill of the pretty woman; she seems respectable and prudent enough. But such an avid vanity may well make concessions to circumstances, and the worst aspect of it, in my opinion, is that not everything is considered and deliberate; a certain happy instinct guides her and protects her. In such a born coquette nothing is more dangerous than audacity spawned by innocence."

The major, having returned to the family estates, devoted his waking hours to inspections and investigations. He now had occasion to observe that any grand concept, however correct and carefully formulated, is subject in its realization to so many obstacles and so much unpredictable interference that the original idea almost disappears and at times seems to have perished utterly, until in the midst of all the confusion, the possibility of success once more appears, when we see time, as the best ally of unbending persistence, extend a helping hand.

And so here, too, the sorry sight of handsome, extensive, neglected, abused estates might have seemed a hopeless situation, had not the sensible observations of perceptive agronomists made it possible to predict that a few years' intelligent and honest management would suffice to restore life to that which had withered and motion to that which was stagnating, so that at last, through order and industry, one might reach one's goal.

The ease-loving marshal had arrived, accompanied by a solemn solicitor, who, however, gave the major fewer worries than his client. For the latter belonged to that species of men who have no goals, or, if they see any goal before them, reject the proper measures to achieve it. Daily and hourly comfort was an absolute necessity of his life. After long hesitation, he was finally ready to rid himself of his creditors, to shake off the burden of his estates, to set his disorderly household to rights, and to enjoy a respectable and secure income in peace, but not to relinquish the least of his previous usages.

In general, he acceded to everything that would place the brother and sister in unambiguous possession of the estates, particularly of the principal estate. But he would not completely relinquish his claim to a certain pavilion on the grounds, where every year on his birthday he gathered his oldest friends and newest acquaintances, or, furthermore, to the ornamental garden that linked the pavilion with the main building. All the furniture was to remain in this pleasure house. The engravings on the walls, as well as the fruit from the espaliers, were to be reserved for him alone. Peaches and strawberries of the choicest varieties, large and tasty pears and apples, but especially one sort of small, drab apple, which he had been wont for many years to present to the widowed princess, were to be faithfully delivered to him. Other stipulations followed, of little significance, but uncommonly troublesome to the master, tenants, stewards, and gardeners.

The marshal was, by the bye, in the best of humors, since he persisted in thinking that at last everything would work itself out according to his wishes, as his frivolous nature had envisioned. So he ordered excellent meals, spent several hours a day in un strenuous hunting for the sake of exercise, told story after story, and showed a cheery face throughout. He took his leave in the same genial manner, thanked the major heartily for his brotherly conduct, asked for another small sum of money, and had the little drab golden apples, which had been especially good this year, carefully packed, and, with this treasure, which he intended as a welcome gift for the princess, he set off for the widow's residence, where he indeed found a gracious and friendly reception.

The major, for his part, was left with the very opposite feelings, and would have despaired at the constraints imposed upon him, had he not been aided by that feeling which buoys up a man of action when he is called to resolve a tangled situation and may hope to see it disentangled.

Fortunately the solicitor was an upright man, who, since he had so much other business to attend to, brought this matter quickly to a close. Fortunately, too, a servant of the marshal's came forward, who, for modest recompense, promised to help in the operations, which boded well for their successful outcome. But gratifying though all this

was, as a man of integrity the major felt that in working his way through this affair he had to dirty his hands considerably in order to clean it up.

When a break in the work left him some leisure, he hurried to his estate, where, mindful of the promise that he had made to the fair widow and that he had not forgotten, he took out his poems, which were put away in good order; at the same time he came upon many albums and commonplace books containing excerpts from his reading of both ancient and modern authors. Given his fondness for Horace and the Roman poets, the majority of the quotations were from these, and it struck him that the quotations referred mostly to regret for time past, for situations and feelings now flown, never to return. The following quotation may stand for many others:

Heu!

Quae mens est hodie, cur eadem non puero fuit?
Vel cur his animis incolumes non redeunt genae!

How comes it that today my mood
Is cheerful, and so clear my mind!
When, with the fresher blood of youth,
I felt so wild, in gloom confined?
But when old age its victim tweaks
However calm I may remain,
I think back on those rosy cheeks,
And wish that they were mine again.

Having quickly found his hunting poem among his well-ordered papers, our friend looked with pleasure at the carefully lettered fair copy he had painstakingly penned years before, in Latin script and octavo format. The generous proportions of the precious portfolio easily accommodated it, and an author could hardly have found his work more splendidly bound. It was essential to enclose a few lines, but prose would scarcely do. The Ovid passage came once more to mind, and he now thought that a verse paraphrase, as previously one in prose, would best serve his turn. The passage went:

Nec factas solum vestes spectare juvabat,
Tum quoque dum fierent; tantus decor adfuit arti.

Translated:

I saw it once in expert fingers
—That moment gladly I recall—
It first unfolds, then finished lingers

In glory which surpasses all.
Now it belongs to me, 'tis true,
And still I inwardly confess:
I wish there yet were more to do,
To me the making was the best.

But our friend was only momentarily satisfied with this translation. He chided himself for having substituted a dreary abstract noun for the elegant inflected verb *dum fierent*, and was vexed that no matter how he pondered he could not improve those lines. His preference for the ancient languages suddenly reawakened, and the luster of the German Parnassus, to which he had in fact secretly aspired, seemed to grow dim.

At last, however, when he had decided that this pretty compliment was after all well-turned, as long as it was not compared to the original, and that a lady would doubtless take it kindly, another scruple occurred to him: that one could not be gallant in verse without seeming to be in love, so that, as a prospective father-in-law, he would be playing an odd role. The worst, however, was still to come: Ovid's lines are spoken by Arachne, a weaver as skilled as she is lovely and delicate. Since however, Arachne had been transformed into a spider by jealous Minerva, there was the danger that a pretty woman compared to a spider, even indirectly, might be seen as hovering in the middle of her web. He could imagine that among the cultivated company that surrounded the lady a learned man might be found who would ferret out the reference. How our friend extricated himself from his perplexity we do not ourselves know, and we must consider this one of those cases over which even the Muses permit themselves the roguery to draw a veil. Suffice it to say that the hunting poem was dispatched, but of the poem itself we have a few more words to add.

The reader of it is entertained by the unabashed love of the hunt and whatever may further it. Pleasure is taken in the change of the seasons, which arouses and stirs the hunter's enthusiasm. The peculiarities of all the creatures that are stalked and hunted, the various types of men who surrender to the pleasures and the hardships of the chase, the chance circumstances that help or hinder—all of this, especially in regard to fowl, was set forth in most spirited fashion, and with great originality.

Nothing was omitted, from the way the wood grouse spreads its tail, to the second migration of the snipe, to the construction of a blind—all was accurately seen, clearly recorded, ardently traced, and presented in a light, witty, often ironic tone.

Nevertheless, an elegiac theme pervaded the entire poem. It had been composed more as a farewell to these particular joys of life, a

stance which, to be sure, lent the poem an aura of pleasurable experience and had a most salutary effect, but ultimately, like the Latin maxims, left a feeling of emptiness after the enjoyment. Whether from looking through these papers, or from a momentary indisposition, the major did not feel happy. At the parting of the ways where he now stood, he suddenly became acutely aware that the passing years take away one by one the fine gifts they once brought. Missing his visit to the baths, having the summer slip by without any enjoyment, lacking his customary regular exercise—all this brought on physical discomforts that he took for real infirmities and regarded perhaps more impatiently than was proper.

Even as women find extremely painful the moment when their previously undisputed beauty first comes into question, so men of a certain age, although still in their full vigor, experience the slightest sense of waning powers as extremely disagreeable, indeed, alarming.

Another occurrence, however, which should have proved disquieting, helped him recover his good mood. His cosmetic valet, who had not left his side even on this country visit, seemed for some time to be taking a different tack, required by the major's early rising, his daily rides and rounds, and the presence of many busy people, and, when the marshal was there, of many who were not busy. For some time now he had spared the major all the petty measures that only an actor might justifiably bother with. But he insisted all the more sternly on a few crucial points that had previously been obscured by trivial hocus-pocus. Everything that did not merely further the appearance of health but truly preserved health was stressed, especially moderation in all things and relaxation after eventful times, as well as the care of the skin and hair, of eyebrows and teeth, of hands and nails, to whose elegant shaping and appropriate length the expert had been attending for some time. In the process moderation was forcefully urged again and again in anything that might upset his equilibrium. Hereupon this mentor in the preservation of beauty asked to be dismissed, since he was no longer of any use to the gentleman. It might be deduced that the man was eager to rejoin his previous patron, so that he might continue to share in the varied and numerous pleasures of the theatrical life.

In truth it did the major much good to be his own master again. An intelligent man needs only to observe moderation, and he will be happy. He could once more freely indulge in his customary exercise of riding, hunting, and all that went with it, and in such moments of solitude, the image of Hilarie would once more appear joyfully before him, and he slipped into the role of a bridegroom, perhaps the pleasantest one permitted us within the bounds of polite society.

For several months now the members of the family had remained without particular news of one another. The major was busy in the capital with the final negotiations for permits and certifications related to the disposition of the estate. The baroness and Hilarie were devoting their energies to preparing the finest, most ample trousseau. The major's son, passionately serving his lovely lady, seemed forgetful of all else. Winter had arrived, and surrounded all the country houses with dismal rainstorms and early darkness.

Had someone lost his way in the vicinity of the manor on a dreary November night and by the faint light of a clouded moon beheld fields, meadows, groves, hills, and bushes spread out dimly before him, but suddenly turning a corner had caught sight of an entire row of lighted windows in a long building, he would surely have expected to meet a festively attired company within. But how astonished he would have been when, conducted up the lighted staircase by a few servants, he had seen only three ladies—the baroness, Hilarie, and a chambermaid—sitting surrounded by cheerful furnishings in the well-lit chambers with bright walls, warm and cozy.

Since we may imagine that we have surprised the baroness in a festive moment, it must be observed that this brilliant illumination is not to be considered unusual here, but is one of the customs the lady had retained from her earlier life. As the daughter of a chief lady-in-waiting, brought up at court, she was accustomed to prefer winter to all other seasons, and to make the luxury of generous lighting an essential element of all her pleasures. Wax candles were never in short supply, but in addition, one of her oldest servants was so fond of technical advances that no sooner was a new type of lamp invented than he tried to introduce it somewhere or other in the manor. Thus it was that in some areas the lighting had gained considerably, but in others partial darkness prevailed.

The baroness had given up the condition of a lady at court to marry, for love, and in full realization of the consequences, a large landowner and serious farmer. Her perceptive husband, seeing that rural life at first did not appeal to her, had, with the agreement of his neighbors and even the sanction of the government, had the roads for several miles around so much improved that there were no better connections with neighboring estates anywhere. Yet the chief aim of this laudable enterprise was to enable the lady to travel about wherever she liked, especially in good weather. Winters, on the other hand, she would spend happily at home with him, since he contrived lighting to make the nights as bright as day. After the death of her husband, the baroness found sufficient employment in devoted care of her daughter, while the frequent visits of her brother supplied affectionate conversation, and the accustomed brightness of the surroundings comfort that might be taken for true contentment.

But on this particular day the lighting was truly fitting. For in one of the rooms we see what seem to be Christmas gifts, striking to the eye and splendid. The clever chambermaid had persuaded the servant to increase the lighting, and had collected and spread out everything that had been prepared thus far for Hilarie's trousseau, actually with the sly intention of calling attention to what was still lacking, rather than to display what had already been accomplished. All the necessities were there, in the best materials and the finest workmanship. There was also no lack of whimsical luxuries, despite which Ananette contrived to point out one gap after another, where one might just as well have seen perfect completeness. Though the eye was dazzled by all the household linens, imposingly laid out, though the cambrics, muslins, and all the many delicate stuffs of that sort, whatever they may be called, threw off an abundance of light, there were no colored silks, the purchase of which had been wisely postponed, since fashions in these fabrics were always changing, and the ladies wanted the newest thing to crown and complete the collection.

After this pleasant viewing, they returned to their customary, though varied, evening amusements. The baroness, who knew well what lends a young lady, wherever fate may lead her, not only a beautiful exterior but also inward grace, and knew what makes her presence sought after, had managed in these rural circumstances to introduce such diverse and educational occupations that Hilarie, despite her youth, seemed at home with everything, found no discussion beyond her, yet still behaved fully in accordance with her years. To explain how this was achieved would take us too far afield; suffice it to say that this evening fulfilled the pattern of their previous life. Interesting reading, charming piano-playing, lovely singing whiled away the hours, as always in pleasing and orderly manner, but now with special significance. A third person was in their thoughts, a beloved and respected man, for whose sake these and many other things were practiced, to give him a most loving reception. It was a bridal feeling, which inspired not only Hilarie with the sweetest sensations; her mother, with her delicate sensibility, innocently shared in it, and even Ananette, usually merely clever and energetic, succumbed to certain distant hopes that made her imagine her absent sweetheart as returning, as present. In this manner the sentiments of all three women, each lovable in her way, had come into accord with the surrounding brightness, the soothing warmth, and the pervading sense of well-being.

Chapter Five

Loud pounding and shouts at the outermost gate, demanding and threatening voices, arguing, the glare of lights and torches in the court-

yard, interrupted the gentle singing. The commotion died down before its cause could be known, yet all was not quiet; on the stairway there was noise and the agitated voices of men coming nearer. The door sprang open without any warning; the women were horrified. Flavio plunged into the room. His aspect was terrifying, his hair in disorder, some of it bristling, some hanging limp in rain-soaked strands. His clothes were in tatters, as though he had been storming through thorns and thickets, and horribly dirty, as though he had waded through mud and marsh.

"My father!" he cried, "Where is my father?" The women stood there, transfixed. The grizzled huntsman, his oldest and most devoted attendant, entering close behind him, exclaimed to him, "Your father is not here, calm yourself! Here is your aunt, here is your cousin! Look!"

"Not here! Then let me go, so I can look for him. He alone must hear it, then I die. Away with these lights, this daylight—it blinds me, it destroys me."

The household doctor appeared, took the young man's hand, carefully feeling his pulse; several servants stood about anxiously. "What am I doing on these carpets? I am spoiling them, destroying them. My misery drips down on them, my vile fate sullies them." He pushed his way toward the door, and they used this attempt to lead him away and bring him to the distant guest room, which his father usually occupied. Mother and daughter stood paralyzed. They had seen Orestes pursued by the Furies, not idealized by art, but in dreadful, revolting reality, which, in contrast to the comfortable rooms gleaming with candlelight, was all the more terrible. Paralyzed, the women looked at one another, and each thought she saw in the eyes of the other the terrifying image that had printed itself so deeply on her own.

Half recovered, the baroness dispatched servant after servant to bring back word. They were somewhat reassured to hear that Flavio had been undressed and dried, and was being tended to. Half aware, half unconscious, he did not resist. In reply to their repeated inquiries, patience was urged.

Finally the anxious women learned that he had been bled and pacified by every means possible. He was quiet now; it was hoped he would sleep.

Midnight approached, and the baroness wanted to see him if he was asleep. The doctor opposed it, the doctor gave way. Hilarie pressed in with her mother. The room was dark; only one candle glimmered behind its green shade. Little could be seen, nothing heard. The baroness approached the bed; Hilarie, full of longing, seized the light and illuminated the slumbering figure. He lay with his face turned away, but one delicate ear, a rounded cheek, now rather pale, peeped charmingly from amidst the once more curling locks; the still hand, with its

long, strong, yet sensitive fingers drew her unsteady glance. Hilarie, herself breathing softly, thought she could hear soft breaths. She brought the candle nearer, like Psyche in danger of disturbing the healing sleep. The doctor took the candle from her and lighted the ladies to their rooms.

How these good people, worthy of all sympathy, passed the hours of the night, remains a secret from us. The next morning, however, from early on, both seemed very impatient. Their questions were endless, their wish to see the sufferer restrained but urgent. Only toward noon did the doctor allow them a short visit.

The baroness approached, and Flavio extended his hand: "Forgive me, dearest Aunt, have patience, perhaps not for long." Hilarie stepped forward, and to her, too, he offered his right hand: "Greetings, dear Sister." The words pierced her to the heart, and he did not release her hand; they gazed at one another, the loveliest of pairs, a contrast in the best sense. The young man's glittering black eyes harmonized with his dusky, tousled hair. She, on the other hand, seemed to stand there in heavenly peace, though in fact the shattering experience was now compounded by the portentous present. The title "Sister"—her deepest feelings were in turmoil.

The baroness spoke: "How are you feeling, dear Nephew?"

"Not too badly, but I have been ill-treated."

"In what way?"

"They bled me; that was cruel. They got rid of it; that was shameless. It does not belong to me; it belongs to her, all of it." With these words his entire being seemed transformed, but with burning tears he buried his face in the pillow.

On Hilarie's face her mother saw an expression of horror. It was as though the dear child were seeing the gates of Hell open before her and for the first time and forever beheld something monstrous. In passionate haste she ran the length of the great hall and threw herself on the sofa in the alcove at the farthest end. Her mother followed her and asked the question whose answer she unfortunately already knew. Looking about her strangely, Hilarie cried, "The blood, the blood—it belongs to her, all to her, and she is not worthy of it. The poor, unhappy boy!" With these words her heart found release in a flood of bitter tears.

Who would be so bold as to reveal the circumstances that developed out of what had gone before, to bring to light the inner calamity that grew out of this first encounter? It had been highly damaging to the patient as well, or so at least the doctor asserted, who came often enough to report and give comfort, but felt obliged to prohibit any further contact. This order was willingly obeyed, for the daughter did

not dare wish what her mother would not have allowed, and so the command of the sagacious man prevailed. However, he brought the reassuring news that Flavio had asked for writing materials, and had written something down, but quickly hidden it under the bedclothes. Now curiosity was added to the prevailing restlessness and impatience; those were trying hours. After some time, however, he brought them a page written in a fine, flowing hand, though in haste. The lines ran as follows:

The birth of wretched man is fraught with wonder,
In wondering erring man goes far astray.
And toward what dark, mysterious, hidden threshold
Feel out uncertain steps the unmarked way?
Then, in the midst of heaven's light and glory
I see, I feel dark night, and death, hell's fury.

Here the noble art of poetry could once more demonstrate its curative powers. Inwardly fused with music, it heals the heart's sorrows from the very core by intensifying them, evoking them, and dispelling them in cathartic pain. The doctor was certain that the young man would soon be cured; physically sound, he would soon recover his spirits if the passion weighing on his mind could be removed or alleviated. Hilarie meditated on a response; she sat at the piano and tried to set the sufferer's lines to music. She did not succeed; nothing in her own soul echoed to such deep sorrow. Yet in this attempt rhythm and rhyme gradually adapted themselves to her own disposition, so that she could respond to the poem with soothing serenity, taking time to compose and polish the following stanza:

Although in pain and torment yet you wander,
Youth's happiness still lies along your way.
With bold and manly footsteps cross that threshold,
Approach the realm where friendship's light holds sway.
There, in the midst of those who love you dearly,
Let waters from life's fountain now flow clearly.

The family doctor delivered the message. It succeeded; the youth responded more calmly. Hilarie continued gently, and little by little a brighter view and clearer ground seemed to be gained. Perhaps it will be granted to us one day to communicate the entire course of this delightful cure. Suffice it to say that some time passed very agreeably in such pursuits, and the way was prepared for a calm reunion, which the doctor did not intend to postpone any longer than necessary.

In the meantime, the baroness had engaged herself with ordering and arranging old papers, and this occupation, so suitable for present conditions, had a remarkable effect on her agitated mind. She looked

back over many years of her life, in which threatening misfortunes had not come to pass; to contemplate them strengthened her courage for the moment. She was especially moved by the memory of a lovely friendship with Makarie at a time when circumstances were trying. The splendor of that unique woman once more came to mind, and she promptly decided to turn to her now as well, for to whom else could she confide her feelings, to whom reveal her hopes and fears?

While tidying up, she also came upon, among other things, a miniature of her brother, and sighed with a smile at the resemblance to his son. Hilarie surprised her at this moment, took possession of the portrait, and she, too, was strangely moved by the resemblance.

Thus some time passed; finally, with the doctor's approval and in his company, Flavio came, announced, to breakfast. The ladies had been apprehensive of this first appearance. But often in significant, even terrible moments, something cheerful, even comic will occur, and this happened now. The son came entirely in his father's clothing. Since his own clothes were unusable, he had drawn on the major's outdoor and indoor wardrobes that were kept at his sister's for his convenience in hunting and family activities. The baroness smiled and maintained her composure. Hilarie was overcome in a way she did not understand. She turned her face away, and in this moment the young man could not utter either a friendly word or a polite phrase. To help the gathering out of its embarrassment, the doctor began a comparison of the two figures. The father was somewhat taller, he remarked, hence the coat was rather too long; the son, however, was broader in the shoulders, for which reason the coat was too tight. Both discrepancies gave the masquerade a comical cast.

By dwelling on these details, they got past the danger of the moment. Yet for Hilarie, the resemblance between the youthful image of the father and the vivid living presence of the son remained uncanny, even oppressive.

But now we would dearly wish to have the next period described in all particulars by some delicate feminine hand, since we ourselves are restricted by our own manner and style to the most general aspects. For at this point the influence of poetry must once again be spoken of.

It could not be denied that our Flavio had a certain talent, but he required passionate, tangible emotion in order to produce something truly excellent. For that reason, then, almost all the poems dedicated to that irresistible woman appeared powerful and praiseworthy, and now, read aloud expressively in the presence of a lovely and charming girl, were bound to achieve no little effect.

A woman who sees another woman loved passionately falls easily into the role of confidante. She harbors a secret, scarcely conscious

feeling that it would not be displeasing to be gently elevated to the place of the adored one. Their conversation, indeed, became more and more significant. It touched upon dialogue poems, of the sort a lover likes to write, since he can have his beloved reply more or less what he would wish her to say, albeit in modest form, and what he could hardly expect to hear from her own lovely mouth. Such poems also were read aloud with Hilarie, and since they read from only one manuscript, at which they both had to look in order to come in on cue, and therefore both had to hold the booklet, it happened that, as they were sitting side by side, their bodies and their hands gradually moved ever nearer, until finally their wrists touched, quite naturally, under cover of the papers.

But in this agreeable state of affairs, with all the charming pleasure that flowed from it, Flavio was tormented by a painful worry, which he concealed but poorly. Continually longing for his father to arrive, he let it be seen that he had something of the greatest importance to confide to him; with a little thought this secret would not have been difficult to divine. In a moment of high emotion the importunate youth must have pushed matters to extremes, and the charming lady must have decisively rejected him and abolished and destroyed the hopes to which he had clung so obstinately. We would not presume to describe the scene that must have taken place, for fear we might lack the requisite youthful ardor. Suffice it to say that he was so beside himself that he impetuously fled his garrison without leave and, in order to find his father, desperately struck out through night, storm, and rain toward the estate of his aunt, arriving as we recently saw him. With the restoration of sober thoughts, he now saw vividly the consequences of such a step, and, in the continued absence of his father, his only possible hope of intercession, he had no notion how to compose himself or rescue himself.

How astonished and overcome he was, therefore, when a letter from his colonel was handed to him. He broke the familiar seal with fear and trembling, only to find himself addressed in the most friendly manner, and to learn that his leave was being extended for an additional month.

However inexplicable this kindness seemed, he was nevertheless freed of a burden which had begun to weigh on his mind even more alarmingly than his rejection in love. He could now fully appreciate the happiness of being so well cared for by his kindly relatives; he could enjoy the presence of Hilarie, and after a short time was once again possessed of all those pleasant and sociable qualities that for a time had made him indispensable to the fair widow and her circle, and which had been obscured only by his peremptory demand for her hand.

In such a mood it was far easier to await the arrival of his father, and in any case intervening natural events stirred them to greater activity. Incessant rain, which until now had confined them to the manor, was falling everywhere in great quantity and had flooded river after river. Dams had burst, and the area below the manor lay like a smooth lake, from which villages, farms, larger and smaller estates, set as they were on high ground, stuck out like islands.

They were prepared for such rare, though foreseeable, situations. The mistress gave orders, and the servants carried them out. After the first, general, rescue measures, bread was baked, cattle were slaughtered, and fishing boats plied back and forth, bringing aid and provisions to the far corners of the land. All went well; the kindly offerings were received gladly and gratefully, and in only one place were the local selectmen distrusted in their distribution. Flavio took over the project, and steered his fully laden boat quickly and successfully to its destination. The simple task, handled simply, was accomplished splendidly. Our young man also performed an errand which Hilarie had entrusted to him as he set out. At the very time of these misfortunes, a woman in whom Hilarie had taken particular interest was due to deliver a baby. Flavio found the new mother, and brought home both general gratitude and her particular thanks. Expeditions of this sort were bound to produce many stories. Although no deaths had occurred, there was much to tell of miraculous escapes, of strange, amusing, even comical events: interesting descriptions were given of many perilous situations. Suffice it to say that Hilarie suddenly felt an irresistible desire to undertake such an expedition too, to visit the new mother, bring gifts and spend a few pleasant hours with her.

After some resistance on the part of her good mother, Hilarie's eagerness for the adventure prevailed. We freely admit that when we first learned of this incident we were rather worried that some danger might be lurking—the boat running aground, capsizing, mortal danger to the fair one, a dramatic rescue by the brave youth, so that the loose bond between them might be tightened. But there was no question of any of this; the excursion went smoothly; the new mother was visited and received her gifts, and the presence of the doctor was not without good effect. If now and then a slight obstacle arose, if an apparently dangerous moment seemed to unnerve the rowers, it ended in jest, with each accusing the other of an anxious expression, greater nervousness, or a frightened gesture. Meanwhile their mutual trust had increased considerably; the habit of seeing each other and being together under all circumstances had grown stronger, and the dangerous position, in which kinship and inclination seemed to justify drawing closer and holding fast to one another, grew ever more acute.

Yet they were to be lured pleasantly farther and farther along this path of love. The skies cleared, and intense cold, appropriate to the season, set in. The waters froze before they could recede. Suddenly the theater of the world changed before all eyes. What once the flood had separated was now connected by the frozen ground. Immediately there came to mind the wonderful art invented in northern climes to glorify the first, brief winter days and to bring new life to the frozen world. The storeroom was opened, and they all looked for their labeled skates, each eager, despite the risk, to be the first to step out on the clean, smooth ice. Among the residents of the manor were many in whom practice had developed great skill, for this sport could be enjoyed almost every year on nearby lakes and the network of canals, though this year offered a much expanded surface.

Now Flavio for the first time felt healthy through and through, and Hilarie, taught by her uncle from her earliest years, proved herself both graceful and strong on the newly created ground. Merrily and more merrily still they glided, now together, now alone, now separated, now united. Parting, normally such sorrow, was converted into an amusing little game, as they fled one another, only to come together again a moment later.

But in the midst of this pleasure and merriment, there was still a multitude of needs. Some places had still been but partially supplied: and now sleighs, drawn by sturdy horses, sped back and forth with the most essential goods; and, what was even more to the region's benefit, the many agricultural products from outlying farms too far from the main road could now be transported to the warehouses in the towns and villages, from which in turn all sorts of goods could be brought back. Thus a region stricken and in bitter need could now be liberated and supplied once more, joined together by a smooth surface open to the skilled and the bold.

The young pair, too, in the midst of their pleasures did not fail to be mindful of various obligations of charity. They visited the new mother, bringing her everything she needed. They visited others as well: old people, whose health had given cause for concern; pastors, with whom they were accustomed to hold edifying conversations, and whom they found even more admirable in this time of trial; small landowners, who in earlier times had rashly chosen to build on dangerously low spots, but this time, protected by well-constructed dikes, had remained unharmed, and after boundless anxiety were now doubly thankful to be alive. Every farm, every house, every family, every individual had a tale to tell; each had become an important person both to himself and to others, and thus each tended to break into the other's story. But talk and action, coming and going, were all conducted in haste, for there was always the danger that a sudden thaw might

destroy the entire happy circle of welcome mutual aid, threatening hosts and cutting guests off from their homes.

If their days were spent in such lively and engaging activities, the evenings provided pleasant hours of quite another sort. For ice-skating has the advantage over all other physical exercise that it neither overheats nor tires its devotees. Our limbs seem to become more supple, and every expenditure of strength produces fresh strength, so that finally a blissfully active peace comes over us, and we are tempted to glide on forever.

On this particular day our young pair could not tear itself away from the smooth ice. Each dart toward the illuminated manor, where a large company had already gathered, was abruptly reversed in favor of a return into the distance. They did not want to separate, for fear of losing each other, and each took the other by the hand to be quite certain of the other's presence. But the sweetest variation of all was when their arms rested on one another's shoulders, and their fingertips secretly played with one another's curls.

The full moon rose in the glowing, starry sky, and crowned the magic of the surroundings. They could see one another distinctly again, and each sought in the eye of the other the usual response, but something seemed different. Out of their depths a light seemed to shine forth, hinting at what the mouth wisely left unspoken. Both had a sense of festive well-being.

All of the tall willows and alders along the ditches, all of the low-growing shrubs on hills and hilltops were clearly visible. The stars blazed, the cold had intensified. They felt none of it, and skated down the long glittering reflection of the moon, directly toward the silver planet itself. Then they looked up and saw in the glitter of the reflection the figure of a man floating back and forth. He seemed to be following his shadow; his dark form, surrounded by light, proceeded toward them. Instinctively they turned around, for meeting someone would have been disagreeable. They avoided the figure, which still forged ahead; the figure seemed not to have seen them, and was taking a direct route toward the manor. Then it abandoned this direction and circled several times around the couple, who were now almost frightened. With some cunning they tried to reach the shadows. In full moonlight the other sped toward them. He was very near them now. There was no mistaking Flavio's father.

Hilarie, braking herself in surprise, lost her balance and fell. Flavio was instantly down on one knee, cradling her head in his lap. She hid her face, not knowing what had come over her.

"I will go for a sled. One is just passing down there. I hope she is not hurt. I will meet you here, by these three alders." So spoke the father, and was off and away.

Hilarie pulled herself up, holding onto the youth. "Let us flee!" she cried, "I cannot bear it." She sped off toward the back of the manor house at such a pace that Flavio caught up with her only with difficulty, pleading with her in the most affectionate words.

There is no describing the inner state of the three, astray and adrift on the slippery surface in the moonlight. Suffice it to say, they reached the manor late, the young couple separately, not daring to touch one another, to come close to one another, the father with the empty sled, after he had solicitously hunted far and wide in vain. The music and dancing had already begun. Hilarie, under the pretext of painful injuries from a bad fall, hid herself in her room. Flavio willingly left the leadership of the festivities to some young friends who had already taken charge in his absence. The major did not put in an appearance. He found it peculiar, though not completely unexpected, that his room seemed occupied, with his clothes, linen, and personal effects lying about, but in less order than that to which he was accustomed. The mistress carried out her duties as hostess with exemplary self-control, and how glad she was when all the guests were properly accommodated and finally left her time to clarify things with her brother. That was soon done, but time was needed to recover from the surprise, to comprehend the unexpected turn of events, to dispel doubts, to assuage worries. It was still too early to think of loosing the knot or setting the mind at rest.

Our readers will surely understand that from this point on, in presenting our story, we can no longer offer scenes, but must narrate and reflect if we wish to penetrate the characters' states of mind, on which everything now depends, and portray these adequately.

Thus we shall first report that the major had, since we lost sight of him, been devoting all his time to that family affair, which, though it appeared to be running smoothly, still encountered many unanticipated little obstacles. And indeed, it is not so easy to untangle an old muddle and wind its many threads onto a single spool. Since he often had to be on the move, to attend to the affair in various places and with various people, his sister's letters had reached him but slowly, and not always in order. The news of his son's derangement and illness had been the first to arrive. He then heard something about a leave, which he did not understand. That Hilarie's affection was undergoing a change had been concealed from him, for how could his sister have apprised him of that!

At the tidings of the flood he had hastened his return, but had reached the ice fields only after the frost, whereupon he had equipped himself with skates, and sent his servants and horses toward the manor by a detour. Having proceeded at a smart pace, he was close enough to see the illuminated windows in the distance when he came upon that

distressing sight in the brilliant moonlight and fell into the most dreadful confusion.

The transition from inner truth to outer reality is always painful because of the contrast, and should not loving and cleaving fast have the same rights as parting and renouncing? And certainly, when one is wrenched from the other there opens up in the soul a dreadful abyss, in which many a heart has been lost. For as long as love's illusion lasts, it is imbued with invincible truth, and only strong, manly spirits are ennobled and strengthened by the recognition of a mistake. Such a discovery lifts them out of themselves. They stand elevated above their former selves and, since the old road is closed to them, quickly search out a new one on which they may at once embark with renewed courage.

Countless are the perplexities a man finds himself confronting at such a moment. Countless are the means which a resourceful nature can find among its own capabilities, or, if these are not sufficient, which it can identify outside its own sphere.

Fortunately, however, the major had been prepared deep within for such an eventuality by a half-conscious knowledge which had come to him unbidden. Since dismissing the cosmetic valet, and lapsing back into his natural way of life, renouncing his pretensions to the appearance of youth, he had found his sensation of physical well-being somewhat diminished. He sensed how disagreeable it was to change from young lover to tender father; and yet more and more the latter role forced itself upon him. Concern for the future of Hilarie and his family always came first to his mind, while feelings of love, affection, longing to be with her, developed only later. And when he imagined Hilarie in his arms, what he cared about was the happiness he wished to provide her, rather than the bliss of possessing her. Indeed, if he wanted to think of her with unalloyed pleasure, he had first to remember her divine expression of affection and to summon up the moment when she had so unexpectedly pledged herself to him.

But now, when in clearest night he had seen a united young couple before him, had seen his beloved collapse, cradled in the youth's lap, had seen how both ignored his promised return with help, did not wait for him at the clearly designated place, vanished into the night, while he was left in the deepest melancholy—who in the major's place would not feel despair to the depths of his soul?

The family, habitually united and hoping for even closer union, kept apart in dismay; Hilarie stubbornly stayed in her room, while the major braced himself to hear from his son what had led up to this moment. The calamity had been occasioned by an act of feminine wantonness on the part of the fair widow. Lest she lose her hitherto passionate admirer Flavio to another beauty, who betrayed interest in him, she

shows him more apparent favor than is proper. Excited and emboldened, he seeks to press his suit to improper lengths, causing first offence and quarrels, then a definitive break, bringing the entire relationship irreparably to an end.

When children commit mistakes that lead to sad consequences, paternal kindness has no choice but to sympathize and, where possible, set matters right, and, should these mistakes prove more trivial than had been feared, to forgive and forget. After brief consideration and discussion, Flavio went off to attend in his father's stead to various matters on the newly acquired estates, and was to stay there until the expiration of his leave, then rejoin his regiment, which had meanwhile been reassigned to another garrison.

For several days the major was occupied with opening the letters and packages which had arrived at his sister's during his prolonged absence. Among the rest he found a communication from his cosmetic friend, the well-preserved actor. He, having been informed by the dismissed servant of the major's condition and of his intention to marry, blithely outlined the reservations to be considered in such an undertaking. He treated the affair in his own terms and suggested that for a man of certain years the most dependable cosmetic method was to abstain from the fair sex and enjoy an honorable and comfortable freedom. With a smile the major handed the letter to his sister, with a playful remark, to be sure, but pointing out the importance of its message seriously enough. In the meanwhile he had also composed a poem, whose metrical rendering we cannot give at the moment, but whose content, conveyed through elegant similes and graceful phrasing, went as follows:

"The waning moon, which shines well enough at night, pales before the rising sun. The infatuation of old age disappears in the presence of passionate youth. The spruce, which appears fresh and strong all through the winter, in spring looks brown and discolored beside the newly greening birch."

We would not, however, credit either philosophy or poetry with being the critical help in bringing about a final resolution. For as a small event can have the weightiest consequences, it can often tip the balance, when minds are wavering and the decision can go either way. The major had recently lost one of his front teeth, and feared he might lose the other. An artificial replacement was unthinkable, given his convictions, and to court a young beloved with such a defect began to seem thoroughly humiliating, especially now, when he found himself under the same roof with her. Either earlier or later such an occurrence might perhaps have had little effect, but precisely at this moment such an event must be extremely distasteful to one accustomed to a sound

body. It is as though the keystone of his physical being were gone, and the entire structure now threatened to collapse, piece by piece.

In any case, the major soon spoke understandingly and sensibly with his sister about the apparently so confused situation. They both had to admit that by this detour they had actually reached the goal, or were very close to it, from which, through a chance external factor, the mistake of an inexperienced child, they had thoughtlessly strayed. They found nothing more natural than to persist on this course, to arrange a union of the two children, and then to devote to them, loyally and unceasingly, all the parental solicitude for which they had been able to procure the means.

In full agreement with her brother, the baroness went to Hilarie in her room. She was sitting at the piano and singing to her own accompaniment. When her mother entered, she invited her with a bright look and a nod of her head to listen. The song was a pleasant, soothing one, expressing a mood that could not have been more to the mother's liking. When she had finished, Hilarie stood up, and before the judicious older woman could begin what she had to say, she began to speak. "Dearest Mother! It was good that we kept silent for so long on the most crucial matter. I am grateful that until now you have not touched this chord. But now it is high time that we declare ourselves, if that suits you. How do you see the situation?"

The baroness, well pleased to find her daughter's mood so tranquil and mild, at once began a circumspect review of the past, and of her brother's personality and merits. She conceded that the one superior man with whom she was closely acquainted was bound to make a strong impression on a young girl's unattached heart, and that the girl might come to feel not childlike respect and trust but inclination, love, and finally passion. Hilarie listened attentively and by affirmative expressions and gestures indicated her full agreement. Her mother went on to the son, and the other lowered her long eyelashes. Since the speaker could not find such flattering arguments for the son as for the father, she focused on their similarity and upon the advantages conferred on the son by youth, so that he, once chosen as a completely suitable life companion, promised in time to live up fully to his father's example. Here, too, Hilarie seemed in agreement, though a somewhat graver look and a cast-down eye betrayed an emotion entirely natural in this case. The lecture now proceeded to the external favorable circumstances, which seemed virtually decisive. The newly reached settlement, the fine income for the present, the prospects opening up in several directions—all these points were set forth fully in accordance with the truth, since, finally, there had been no lack of hints (as Hilarie herself must be able to recall) when she and her cousin had been growing up together, that they were betrothed, if only in play. From

all that had been said, the mother drew the obvious conclusion that the union of the young people could now take place without delay, with the full approval of herself and Hilarie's uncle.

Hilarie, with serene gaze and voice, replied that she could not immediately accept this conclusion, and beautifully and sweetly took issue with it on grounds with which any sensitive person will sympathize, and which we shall not attempt to express in words.

Rational people, when they have thought out a sensible way to eliminate this or that problem and reach this or that goal, and have clarified and weighed all the conceivable arguments, find it most disagreeable when those who should be helping to further their own happiness turn out to be of quite another mind, and for reasons hidden deep in the heart oppose what is both commendable and necessary. They exchanged arguments without convincing one another. Reason could make no inroads on feeling, while feeling would not bow to the demands of utility and necessity. The discussion grew heated, and the sharpness of common sense pierced the already wounded heart, which no longer spoke moderately but passionately revealed its true condition, until the mother retreated, astounded at the nobility and dignity of the young girl, who energetically and truthfully articulated the unseemliness, nay, the infamy of such a union.

The reader may well imagine in what perplexity the baroness returned to her brother. Perhaps he may also infer, though not completely, how the major stood before his sister, inwardly flattered by this determined refusal, without hope and yet consoled, freed of any humiliation and feeling compensated by this event, in his innermost soul, for what had become a most delicate question of honor. For the moment he concealed his reaction from his sister and hid his painful satisfaction by saying what was perfectly natural in this situation: that they must not rush anything, but must allow the good child time to choose the newly opened path, which was now more or less obvious, of her own accord.

But we can hardly expect our readers to deduce from the intense inner states of our characters what would be their outward actions, upon which now so much depended. While the baroness left her daughter complete freedom to pass her days pleasantly with music and singing, with drawing and embroidery, and to entertain herself and her mother with reading and reading aloud, the major occupied himself, as spring was approaching, with putting the family affairs in order. His son, who now saw himself as a future landowner and, as he could hardly doubt, the happy spouse of Hilarie, began for the first time to feel a military urge for the glory and rank to be gained if the threatening war should break out. And so in this momentary lull it seemed likely

that the predicament, which now appeared to hinge solely on a whim, would soon be resolved.

Unfortunately this apparent peace afforded no peace of mind. The baroness waited daily, but in vain, for a change of heart in her daughter, who, modestly and infrequently, but, when the occasion warranted, clearly, indicated that she held firm to her resolve, as only someone can who is possessed of an inner truth, whether it is in harmony with the surrounding world or not. The major was ambivalent; he would always feel hurt if Hilarie were really to decide in favor of his son, but were she to decide in his own favor, he was equally convinced that he must refuse her hand.

Pity this good man, with these cares, these torments hanging over him everlastingly, like a drifting mist, sometimes as background for the realities and the urgent tasks of the day, sometimes coming to the fore and obscuring all present concerns. There was a floating and wavering before the eyes of his soul; and if the demands of the day summoned him to swift and effective action, he would awake in the night and feel all sorts of distressing thoughts, constantly forming and reforming, dancing within him in a horrible round. These ever recurring, inescapable visions reduced him to a state we might almost call despair, for activity and productivity, which normally would prove the best cures for such a condition, in this case hardly allayed his misery, let alone satisfied him.

In such plight our friend received a note in an unknown hand, inviting him to the inn in the nearby town, where a traveler in a hurry urgently wished to speak with him. The major, accustomed to such messages from his complex business affairs and social connections, was all the less inclined to delay because the hasty, free flowing script seemed somehow familiar. Calm and composed as usual, he betook himself to the assigned place, where, in the familiar, almost rustic parlor, he encountered the fair widow, prettier and more charming than he had left her. Whether because our imagination is not capable of retaining the exact particulars of the highest excellence, or because agitation had truly lent her greater beauty, in any case, a double measure of poise was necessary for the major to hide his astonishment and his confusion beneath the guise of ordinary courtesy; he greeted her politely with a coldness born of embarrassment.

"No, no, my dear friend!" she exclaimed, "Not for this have I summoned you to these whitewashed walls, to this highly inelegant setting. Such humble surroundings do not call for such courtly intercourse. I am here to free my heart from a heavy burden by saying, confessing, that I have created much havoc in your family."

The major drew back in amazement. "I know all," the widow continued. "There is no need for explanations. You and Hilarie, Hilarie

and Flavio, your good sister—I am sorry for all of you.” Words seemed to fail her; her magnificent eyelashes could not hold back the overflowing tears, her cheeks flushed, and she was more beautiful than ever. The noble man stood before her in extreme confusion, overwhelmed by an unfamiliar emotion. “Let us sit down,” the lovely creature said, wiping her eyes. “Forgive me, have pity on me, you see how I am punished.” She covered her eyes with her embroidered handkerchief to hide how bitterly she was weeping.

“Enlighten me, gracious lady,” he hastened to say.

“Not gracious lady,” she responded, with an angelic smile. “Call me your friend, for you have no truer one. And so, my friend, I know everything. I know all the circumstances of the entire family, am familiar with all your intentions and sufferings.”

“How could you have learned so much?”

“From personal confessions. This hand will not be strange to you.” She showed him several opened letters.

“My sister’s hand! Letters, a sheaf of them, written, to judge by the careless script, to an intimate. Have you and she been acquainted, then?”

“Not directly, but indirectly for some time. See, here is the address: To ***.”

“Another mystery! To Makarie, the most silent of all women.”

“But for that reason also the confidante, the confessor to all troubled souls, to all who have lost themselves and wish to find themselves again but know not how.”

“Thank God,” he exclaimed, “that such mediation has been found. For me to supplicate her would not have been seemly. I bless my sister for doing so. For I, too, know of instances in which that admirable woman has held up a magic mirror of morality to some unhappy person and shown him the true, resplendent inner form behind his outwardly distorted one, and so suddenly put him at peace with himself and summoned him to a new life.”

“This boon she conferred on me as well,” replied the fair one, and in that moment our friend felt, if indistinctly yet with certainty, that from this remarkable person, previously self-absorbed, had emerged a being of moral beauty, sympathetic and generous. “I was not unhappy, merely restless,” she continued. “I was no longer at one with myself, and that ultimately means not being happy. I was no longer pleased with myself; no matter how I fussed before the looking glass, I always seemed to be preparing myself for a masked ball. But ever since Makarie held up her mirror to me, since I became aware of how one can adorn oneself from within, I seem quite beautiful to myself again.” She said all this half smiling, half in tears, and was, it must be admitted,

more than charming. She seemed to merit esteem and to be worthy of a lifetime's true devotion.

"And now, my friend, let us be quick. Here are the letters. For you to read them and reread them, to reflect, to prepare yourself, should take you at least an hour—or more, if you wish. Then all of our circumstances can be decided with few words."

She left him and walked back and forth in the garden. He now unfolded the correspondence between the baroness and Makarie, whose content we shall summarize. The baroness complained about the fair widow. The letter shows how one woman looks at another and passes severe judgment on her. In fact, only outward appearances and utterances are discussed; no thought is given to inner feelings.

Then from Makarie's side, a milder judgment. Description of such a being from within. The outward manifestations appear as a series of accidents, hardly to be blamed, perhaps to be forgiven. Then the baroness reports her nephew's ravings and madness, the growing affection of the young pair, the arrival of the father, Hilarie's determined refusal. Everywhere there are replies from Makarie of impeccable fairness, arising from the strong conviction that all of this must result in moral improvement. Finally she sends the entire correspondence to the fair widow, whose angelically beautiful nature now emerges, and begins to glorify her outward being. It all concludes with her grateful reply to Makarie.

Chapter Six

Wilhelm to Lenardo

Finally, my dear friend, I can say that she is found, and, I may add, to ease your mind, in circumstances that leave nothing to be desired for the good soul. Let me speak in general terms; I am writing from the very spot, where I have before my eyes everything of which I am to give account.

Household based on piety, enlivened and sustained by industry and order, not too restricted, not too broad, the best possible match of duties to abilities and strengths. She is the center of a group of manual workers in the purest, most original sense; here dwell restraint and far-reaching effectiveness, caution and moderation, innocence and diligence. I have seldom experienced a more agreeable atmosphere, with such bright prospects for the immediate and more distant future. These considerations all together should be sufficient to reassure everyone concerned with her.

I may, therefore, in remembrance of all that we agreed upon, most earnestly beseech you to leave it at this general account, perhaps elaborating the picture in your thoughts, but to refrain from any further investigation, and dedicate your full energies to the great life task into which you have probably already been completely initiated.

Am sending one copy of this letter to Hersilie, and another to the Abbé, who, I would guess, knows best where to find you. Am writing a few lines to this tested friend, always as dependable in secret matters as in public; he will share them with you. Especially request that what concerns me be considered with sympathy, and my purpose furthered with devout and faithful wishes.

Wilhelm to the Abbé

If I am not wholly mistaken, Lenardo, highly deserving of our esteem, is at present in your midst; I am therefore sending a copy of a letter, so that it may be sure to reach him. May this excellent young man become involved in your circle in uninterrupted, significant work, since, as I hope, he has found inner peace.

As for myself, after extended alert self-scrutiny, I can only repeat all the more earnestly the petition presented long since by Montan. The desire to complete my journeyman years with more composure and stability is growing ever more urgent. In the expectation that my arguments will be accepted, I have completed my preparations and made my arrangements. Once I have taken care of my worthy friend's affair, I trust I shall be free to embark on my further course under the conditions already mentioned. As soon as I have made one last holy pilgrimage, I plan to arrive in ***. There I hope to find your letters waiting for me, and, in harmony with my inner urge, to begin afresh.

Chapter Seven

After our friend had dispatched the foregoing letters, he proceeded on, passing through several neighboring mountain ranges, ever farther, until the glorious valley opened before him where he meant to resolve so many things before commencing a new way of life. Here he unexpectedly met up with a young and lively traveling companion, through whose presence his endeavors and his pleasures were to flourish. He finds himself thrown in with a painter, like many such in the wide world and even more who frequent and haunt the pages of novels and plays, one who proved this time to be an excellent artist. They soon take to one another, and confide tastes, opinions, and plans to one

another; then it develops that the admirable painter, who can decorate watercolor landscapes with clever figures, drawn and executed well, is infatuated with Mignon's fate, figure, and being. He had often imagined her, and had now set out on this journey to copy from Nature the surroundings in which she had lived, to portray the lovely child in all the surroundings and moments of her life, both happy and unhappy, and so to summon her image, which lives in all feeling hearts, before the eye.

The friends soon reach the great lake, and Wilhelm endeavors to find the indicated places one after another. Splendid country houses, rambling abbeys, ferry crossings and inlets, capes and landing places were sought out, nor did they overlook the dwellings of brave and good-natured fishermen, any more than the cheerful little towns along the lake shore or the small castles on the neighboring hills. All of these the painter successfully captures, matching lighting and color to the mood of the episode in question, so that Wilhelm passed the days in intense emotion.

In many of the pictures Mignon stood in the foreground, in perfect likeness, since Wilhelm could assist his friend's power of imagination with exact details, and embed his general conception of her in the specific features of her identity.

And so one saw the boyish girl portrayed in various settings and significations. Beneath the columned portal to the splendid country house she stood, gazing thoughtfully at the statues in the entry hall. In one sketch she was rocking and splashing in the moored skiff, in another climbing the mast like a bold sailor.

But one picture stood out amongst the rest, one the painter had done on his way, before he encountered Wilhelm; it plumbed Mignon's character. Amidst stark mountain scenery the graceful child, dressed as a boy, stands shining, surrounded by sheer cliffs, sprayed by waterfalls, in the midst of a band difficult to describe. A horrifying, steep, ancient chasm was perhaps never decorated by a more charming or significant crew. The colorful, gypsy-like company, at once crude and fantastical, exotic and ordinary, too casual to inspire fear, too outlandish to awaken trust. Sturdy packhorses plod along, now on corduroy roads, now on steps hewn out of the rock, loaded with a jumble of baggage. From it dangle all the musical instruments which are needed for a bewitching concert, and which now and then molest the ear with discordant tones. In the midst of all this the dear child, withdrawn into herself, without defiance, reluctant but unresisting, led but not dragged. Who could have failed to enjoy this remarkable, fully executed picture? The grim defile within the rocky mass was powerfully rendered, the series of black gorges cutting through everything, piled together, threatening to bar any exit, were it not that a boldly suspended

bridge suggested the possibility of establishing contact with the outside world. With a clever knack for creating an aura of truth, the artist had also indicated the mouth of a cave, which one might imagine as the workshop where Nature produces giant crystals or the den of a brood of fabulous, frightful dragons.

Not without reverent awe did the friends visit the palace of the Marquis. The old man was not yet returned from his journey, but since the two knew how to conduct themselves toward authorities spiritual and secular, in these precincts, too, they were welcomed and treated kindly.

Wilhelm, indeed, was grateful that the master of the house was absent, for although he would have been glad to see the worthy man again and would have greeted him cordially, he shrank from the Marquis's grateful generosity and from being compelled to accept some reward for service he had rendered out of loyalty and affection and for which he had already received the sweetest remuneration.

And so the friends skimmed in a pretty bark from shore to shore, crossing the lake in every direction. In this finest of seasons they missed neither sunrise nor sunset, nor any of the thousand shadings the heavenly body lavishes on its firmament and thence over land and water, reaching its own full glory only in the reflection.

Luxuriant vegetation, sowed by Nature, tended and propagated by human art, surrounded them on all sides. The first chestnut groves had already bid them welcome, and now, reclining beneath the cypresses, they could not suppress a sorrowful smile as they saw laurel growing, pomegranates reddening, orange and lemon trees burgeoning with blossom even as fruits gleamed forth from the dark foliage.

But Wilhelm's spirited companion provided him with a new pleasure. Nature had not endowed our old friend with a painter's eye. Hitherto receptive to visual beauty only in human form, he now suddenly became aware that the world around him had been unlocked by this friend, who, though similar in outlook, had been trained to quite different tastes and talents.

From conversation about the ever changing glories of the region, but even more from concentrated imitation, Wilhelm's eyes were opened, and he was freed of his previous, stubbornly held doubts. He had always distrusted portrayals of Italian landscapes; the sky seemed to him too blue, the violet tones of the alluring distances were lovely, to be sure, but not real, and the various shades of green were simply too vivid. But now he merged his responses completely with his friend's, and, sensitive as he was, learned to see the world with the other's eyes. And when Nature disclosed the open secret of her beauty, it was impossible not to feel an unquenchable longing for art as the most worthy interpreter.

But quite unexpectedly his friend obliged him in another way. He had sometimes sung a cheerful song, and thereby movingly enlivened and accompanied quiet hours of traveling hither and yon through the waves. Now it happened, however, that the painter found an unusual instrument in one of the palaces, a small lute, powerful, resonant, convenient to play and carry around. He could soon tune the instrument and play it so well, to the great pleasure of those present, that, like a new Orpheus, he softened the heart of the castellan, otherwise a stern, dry man, and gently compelled him to lend the instrument to the singer for a while, with the proviso that he faithfully return it before departing and also in the meanwhile come on a Sunday or holiday and entertain the family.

From then on the water and the shore were enlivened in quite a different manner. Boats and skiffs vied for their company; even barges and ships bound for market lingered in their vicinity. Processions of people followed them along the shore, and whenever they landed, they were at once surrounded by a lighthearted crowd; when they departed, everyone called out blessings, contented yet full of yearning.

At length a third party, observing the friends, could have noticed that their missions were actually complete. All the places and locales associated with Mignon had been sketched, some done in light, shadow, and color, some faithfully completed in the heat of the day. To achieve this they had moved from place to place in a singular fashion, because Wilhelm's vow was often troublesome. They managed to evade it now and then, however, by the interpretation that it held only on land and did not apply on the water.

Wilhelm himself felt also that their actual purpose had been accomplished. But he could not deny that the desire to see Hilarie and the fair widow must still be satisfied if he was to leave the region with his mind at rest. His friend, to whom he confided the story, was no less curious, and was glad he had left a splendid empty space in one of the paintings that he now planned to adorn with the figures of such lovely persons.

They began to crisscross the lake, watching the points where newcomers were wont to enter this paradise. They had told their oarsmen that they hoped to meet friends here, and it was not long before they saw a handsome, luxurious vessel gliding along, to which they gave chase, and did not hesitate to grapple it eagerly. The ladies, somewhat alarmed, recovered their composure as soon as Wilhelm presented his note, and they both unhesitatingly recognized the arrow they themselves had drawn on it. The friends were trustingly invited to come aboard the ladies' ship, which they promptly did.

And now imagine the four of them, in the most charming space, seated face to face in this happiest of worlds, cooled by gentle breezes,

rocked on sparkling waves. Imagine the two women, as we saw them described not long ago, and the two men with whom we have been sharing a journey for several weeks, and after some reflection we may see them all in the most pleasant, but also the most perilous, of situations.

For the three, who willingly or unwillingly are already numbered among the renunciants, the worst is not to be feared. The fourth, however, might find himself enrolled in that order only too soon.

After the lake had been crossed several times, and the places of greatest interest both along the shores and on the islands had been pointed out, the ladies were brought to the place where they were to pass the night, and where an experienced guide, engaged for the trip, had arranged for their every comfort. Here Wilhelm's vow was a proper but irksome master of ceremonies, for the friends had only recently spent three days at just this spot and had exhausted whatever was worth seeing in the vicinity. The artist, whom no vow constrained, asked leave to see the ladies safely to land, but since the ladies declined, they parted at some little distance from the harbor.

Hardly had the singer leaped into his boat, which hastily drew away from shore, when he reached for his lute and began to sound that wondrous, plaintive song which the Venetian boatmen send echoing from land to sea, from sea to land. He was well practiced at it, and this time it was specially tender and expressive. In proportion to their increasing distance he augmented the volume, so that the listener on shore seemed to hear the departing singer always at the same distance. At last he let the lute fall silent, trusting to his voice alone, and had the satisfaction of seeing that the ladies, instead of withdrawing indoors, chose to linger by the shore. So inspired was he that he could not cease, even when night and distance effaced the sight of all objects, until finally his calmer friend pointed out that even if the darkness enhanced the music, the boat had by now long since moved beyond that region where the singing might have any effect.

As agreed, the parties met again the following day out on the lake. Flying past, they became acquainted with the succession of beautiful views spread so remarkably before them, sometimes arranged in a row, sometimes displacing each other; doubled in the reflection in the lake, they afforded the most varied pleasure on such trips along the shores. And the artistic copies on paper made it possible to sense and guess at that which could not be viewed directly on the day's excursion. For all of this the quiet Hilarie seemed to possess a clear and open sensibility.

But toward noon something strange occurred again; the ladies disembarked alone, while the men cruised back and forth outside the harbor. Now the singer tried to adapt his performance to their prox-

imity, hoping to achieve a happy effect not only with a prevailing tone of yearning, tender with a lively yodel, but also with cheerful, delicate insistence. Occasionally one or another of the songs, which we owe to beloved characters in the *Apprenticeship*, almost floated of their own accord from the strings and from his lips, but he restrained himself out of kindly consideration, of which he himself was in need. Instead, he ranged among unfamiliar images and emotions, to the benefit of his performance, which was rendered all the more appealing. Thus blockading the harbor, the two friends would have given no thought to food or drink, had the considerate ladies not sent over some delicacies, to which a drink of the choicest wine made the perfect accompaniment.

Every separation, every restriction which comes in the way of our budding passions quickens them rather than dulling them. This time, too, it may be presumed that the brief absence aroused equal longing on both sides. And indeed, before long the ladies could be seen setting out in their gleaming, gay gondola.

The word gondola must not, however, be understood in its melancholy Venetian sense. Here it refers to a cheerful, comfortable, and attractive boat which, had our little circle been twice as large, would still have been roomy enough.

Several days passed in this odd manner, between meeting and parting, between separating and coming together. Even as they enjoyed the most delightful companionship, loss and renunciation hovered always before their agitated spirits. In the presence of new friends, older friends came to mind; when they missed their new friends, they had to admit that these, too, had already established a strong claim upon remembrance. Only a composed and tested spirit like our fair widow could maintain her equilibrium in hours such as these.

Hilarie's heart had been too sorely wounded for her to be able to accept a new, clear impression. But when the beauty of a magnificent region soothingly surrounds us, when the kindness of sensitive friends begins to affect us, something peculiar comes over our minds and hearts, calling what is past, what is absent, back to us like a dream, while the present, wraithlike, recedes as though it were but an illusion. Thus rocked back and forth, attracted and repelled, approaching and retreating, they ebbed and flowed for several days.

Without judging the situation more closely, their guide, a skilled and experienced man, still thought he detected some alteration in the previously calm behavior of his heroines. When at last the reasons for the capriciousness of the situation became clear to him, he managed even here to bring about a most gratifying outcome. When the time arrived for the ladies to leave once more for the place where their meal awaited them, they were met by another decorated boat, which, pulling

alongside theirs, displayed a well-laid table with all the essentials for a little feast. Thus they could expect to spend several more hours together, and only nightfall brought the customary parting.

Fortunately, the two men, on their previous excursions, had neglected to visit the most artfully decorated of the islands, out of a certain fetish for Nature. Even now they had not thought of showing their lady friends the island's contrivances, which were by no means well maintained, before the glorious natural scenes were completely exhausted. But suddenly something dawned on them! They took the guide into their confidence; he was at once able to expedite the excursion, and they thought it the most wonderful of all. Now, after so many interrupted pleasures, they could hope for and look forward to spending three entire heavenly days together, in a secluded place.

Here we must particularly praise the guide; he belonged to that energetic and skilled sort who, accompanying various parties, cover the same routes often. Well acquainted with the country's conveniences and inconveniences, they know what to avoid and what to seek out, and, without neglecting their own interest, are able to conduct their clients through the country more economically and more pleasurably than they would have managed on their own.

At the same time a lively maidservant of the ladies took an active part in the preparations for the first time, so that the fair widow could set the condition that the two gentlemen stay with her as guests, and accept her modest hospitality. Here, too, everything took the most favorable turn possible; for the clever guide had, on this occasion as on previous ones, made such wise use of the ladies' letters of introduction and credit that, in the absence of its owner, the castle and its grounds on the island were made available. Not only the kitchen was at their disposal; there was even some suggestion that the cellar might be open to them. So well did everything fall into place that from the very first moment they could not but feel at home, as though they were the born masters of this paradise.

The travelers' entire baggage was forthwith brought onto the island, which resulted in great comfort for the company. The greatest advantage achieved, however, was that all the portfolios of the excellent artist, in one place for the first time, gave him the opportunity to show the fair ones the route he had followed, in exact sequence. All were delighted with his work. Here was no need for the mutual canonization customary between artists and connoisseurs; here an excellent man received the most sincere and perceptive praise. But lest we be suspected of hoodwinking the credulous reader with generalities about something we cannot actually show him, we insert the judgment of an expert, who some years later lingered with admiration over the works in question, as well as similar and related ones:

"He succeeds in capturing the serenity of quiet views of the lake, where cozy, clustered houses reflected in the clear waters seem to be bathing; shores, rimmed with verdant hills, behind which rise wooded mountains and glacier-covered peaks. The coloration in such scenes is bright, and gaily fresh, with the distances as if suffused in softening mist that, grayer and denser, eddies forth from streams running through gorges and valleys, and marks their course. His ability is no less to be praised in the views from valleys closer to the high mountains, where densely forested slopes descend and clear streams rush by the foot of the cliffs.

"He has admirable skill at differentiating the various species of mighty shade trees in the foreground, both in the form of the whole and in the arrangement of the branches, and even in the individual groupings of the leaves. Nor is he less skilled in the many nuances of green in which the gentle breath of soft breezes seems to rustle and the light seems to dance.

"In the middle ground of his paintings the rich green tones gradually fade and, in the pale violet of the distant mountain peaks, unite with the blue of the sky. Yet our artist is most successful of all in his portrayal of high Alpine regions: their simple vastness and stillness, the extensive meadows on the slopes, clothed in the brightest green, where dark, isolated firs rear up from the sward and foaming brooks plunge from high rock walls. Whether he equips his meadows with grazing cattle or his narrow mountain path winding along cliffs with laden pack horses and mules, the animals are all drawn well and expressively. Always applied in suitable places and in not too great abundance, they adorn and enliven these pictures without disturbing, or even diminishing, their calm solitude. The bold hand of a master is evident in the execution, which is brief, accomplished with few, sure strokes, yet fully realized. Later on he used bright English permanent pigments on paper; therefore these paintings are of a remarkably florid coloration, bright yet strong and rich.

"His representations of deep chasms, where only barren rock projects, and the rushing stream thunders in the depths, spanned by a daring bridge, are to be sure, less attractive to the eye than the previous paintings, but their truthfulness stirs us. We admire the powerful effect of the whole, evoked sparingly with a few telling strokes and patches of color.

"He can portray with similar accuracy those heights where neither tree nor shrub can grow, but where, among jagged rocks and snowy summits, sunny spots are clothed in tender grass. Lovely and verdant and inviting though he makes such places appear, he wisely forbears to place grazing herds on them, for these are fields where only the chamois feed, and wild hayers go about their perilous business."

We are not departing from our aim of acquainting our readers as fully as we can with the character of such wild regions if we briefly explain the term wild hayers. It refers to the poorer inhabitants of the high mountains who undertake to cut hay from grassy spots which are utterly inaccessible to cattle. For this purpose they put climbing irons on their feet and scale the steepest, most dangerous cliffs, or, if necessary, let themselves down on ropes from rock walls onto the grass. After cutting the hay and letting it dry, they toss it from the heights down to the valley floor, where it is collected and sold to livestock owners, who bid for it gladly, knowing that this hay is of the choicest quality.

Hilarie especially looked with care at these pictures, which, to be sure, would have captivated anyone. Her remarks revealed that she herself was no stranger to the subject. This was certainly not lost on the painter, who valued the approbation of this most charming of persons above anyone else's. Accordingly, her older friend no longer remained silent, but reproached Hilarie for hesitating again, as always, to come forward with her own talent. Here it was not a question of praise or reproach but of learning. A finer opportunity might never present itself again.

Now that she was compelled to display them, her pictures revealed how much talent lay hidden in this quiet, delicate being. Her ability was innate, and had been diligently developed. She possessed a good eye and a neat hand, such as can transform women's toilette and attire into a higher art. There was, to be sure, some uncertainty in her strokes, and therefore a lack of distinctive character in her subjects, but the care with which they were executed was admirable. Yet the entire composition was not approached in the most advantageous fashion and lacked the final stamp of artistry. She fears, it seems, that she would profane the object if she did not remain wholly true to it, and therefore she is timid and gets lost in details.

But now the painter's great, free talent and bold hand stimulate, awaken the feeling and taste slumbering within her. It becomes clear to her that she need only take courage and follow seriously and punctiliously a few guiding principles which the painter repeatedly articulated in friendly but urgent tones. Her strokes take on decisiveness; she comes to dwell less on the parts than on the whole, and so a pleasing talent unexpectedly blossoms into accomplishment, like the rosebud that scarcely attracts our notice in the evening, but in the morning, with the rising sun, bursts open before our eyes, so that we imagine we can see with our own eyes the living quiver with which the splendid phenomenon reaches out toward the light.

This aesthetic education was not without moral consequences; for the recognition of heartfelt gratitude toward someone who has taught us a significant lesson makes a magical impression on the pure heart. This was the first joyous feeling to emerge in Hilarie's soul in some time. To see the glorious world spread out before her for days on end, and now suddenly to experience a fuller power to represent it! What bliss, to approach the inexpressible through lines and colors! She felt swept up by new youth, and could not but harbor a special fondness for the person to whom she owed this happiness.

So they sat side by side; it would not have been possible to say whether the one was more eager to transmit artistic techniques or the other to seize the suggestions and carry them out. They embarked on a happy rivalry, such as seldom arises between teacher and pupil. Sometimes the painter seemed to want to make some alteration on her drawing with a firm stroke, but she would gently refuse and hurry to do what was wanted, what was essential, always to his astonishment.

The last evening had now arrived, and a brilliant full moon shining forth made the transition from day to night imperceptible. The party had gathered on one of the highest terraces, so as to have a clear view of the lake, some of whose length stretched out beyond their sight, but whose entire breadth was visible, with reflected illumination from every side glittering on its calm surface.

No matter what people might discuss in such circumstances, they could not fail to dwell once more upon the delights of this sky, this water, this earth, under the influence of a more powerful sun, a milder moon—all discussed a hundred times before, now glorified in lyric effusions.

But what went unmentioned, what could scarcely be acknowledged, was the deep, painful feeling stirring in each heart, with greater or lesser intensity, but with equal truth and delicacy. The anticipation of parting hovered over everything. The gradual lapse into silence became almost painful.

Then the singer made bold to strike up his instrument, casting aside the discretion he had earlier observed. The image of Mignon rose before him with the first bars of the lovely child's delicate song. Forgetting all restraint, plucking the resonant strings with a force born of yearning, he began to sing:

Know you the land where lemon blossoms blow,
And through dark leaves— —

Hilarie rose in great agitation and hurried away, covering her brow. Our fair widow gestured with one hand in warning to the singer, while with the other she grasped Wilhelm's arm. The thoroughly bewildered youth set out after Hilarie, while the more self-possessed widow drew

Wilhelm after them. And when all four stood facing one another in the brilliant moonlight, the general emotion could no longer be concealed. The women threw themselves into each other's arms, the men embraced, and Luna stood witness to the noblest, chastest tears. Only slowly did some composure return, and they drew apart, in silence, moved by strange feelings and wishes, which, however, were already shorn of hope. Now our painter, who had been carried off by his friend, was initiated, beneath the majestic sky, in that solemn and lovely night hour, into all the pangs of the first order of the renunciants. His friends had already passed beyond this order, but now saw themselves in danger of being sorely tested once more.

The young men had gone to bed late; awakening betimes, they took heart and believed themselves strong enough to bid farewell to this paradise. They conceived various plans which would enable them to linger in the vicinity without injury to their obligations.

They intended to present these proposals, when they were surprised with the tidings that the ladies had departed at the break of day. A letter in the hand of our queen of hearts offered some insight. It would be difficult to say whether the note expressed more prudence or goodness, more love or friendship, more testimony to their merit or bashful partiality. Alas, it ended with the stern demand that they neither follow their friends nor seek them out, and even if by chance their paths were to cross, they were faithfully to avoid meeting.

Now the paradise was transformed as if by a stroke of magic into a desolate waste, and they themselves would certainly have smiled, had they realized at the moment how very unfair and ungrateful they were all of a sudden toward so beautiful and remarkable a place. No self-centered hypochondriac could have more cruelly and maliciously censured and criticized the dilapidated buildings, the neglected walls, the crumbling towers, the overgrown paths, the dying trees, the mossy mouldering of the grottos, and whatever else there was of that sort to notice. But then they took themselves in hand as well as they could; the artist carefully packed up his work, and both embarked together. Wilhelm accompanied him to the upper reaches of the lake, whence, as previously agreed, the artist was to find his way to Natalie, to carry her with his paintings to regions where she herself might not set foot for a long time to come. He was also authorized to confess to her the unexpected episode that had qualified him to be kindly accepted among the members of the order of renunciation, where through loving treatment he would be, if not healed, at least consoled.

Lenardo to Wilhelm

Your letter, dearest friend, found me in the midst of an activity which I might call confusion, were not its purpose so high, its success so

certain. My connection with your people is more important than either party could have guessed. I must not even begin to write of that, for it immediately becomes obvious how incommensurable the whole thing is, and how ineffable the interconnection. For now our watchword must be: act and say nothing. A thousand thanks for the half veiled allusion to such a pleasing secret at a great distance; I do not begrudge the good creature so simple and happy a lot, while I myself am driven about in a whirl of complications, yet not without a guiding star. The Abbé has undertaken to report the rest to you; I must concentrate on what is essential; longing evaporates in deeds and accomplishments. You have done me—and now no more. Where there is enough to do, no room remains for reflection.

The Abbé to Wilhelm

Your well-meant letter, quite contrary to your intentions, came within a hair's breadth of doing us great harm. Your description of the long-lost young woman is so cheerful and appealing that our strange friend might have dropped everything to seek her out himself, were our now joint plans not so comprehensive and far-reaching. But he has now passed the test, and it is confirmed that he is fully imbued with the importance of our undertaking, and that it alone has the power to hold him.

In this new relationship, whose initiation we owe to you, there turned out to be, upon closer scrutiny, far greater advantages both for the others and for ourselves than had been expected.

For recently a canal has been proposed for a region poorly favored by Nature, where some of the lands turned over to him by his uncle are located. The canal will also pass through our holdings, with the result that their value, when we join forces, will be incalculably increased.

Here he can very easily pursue his overwhelming desire to make a completely fresh start. To either side of the new waterway uncultivated and uninhabited land can be found in plenty. Here spinners and weavers may settle; masons, carpenters, and blacksmiths may build them and themselves modest workshops. Everything may be destroyed by the first person to come along, while we others, however, are engaged in solving the more complicated issues and promoting a change in activity.

This, then, is our friend's next assignment. Complaint after complaint has been reaching us from the mountains that food shortages are getting out of hand; these areas are also said to be overpopulated. He will look around there, assess conditions and people, and select

truly industrious ones, the ones who are useful to themselves and to others, for our colony. In addition, I can report of Lothario that he is preparing for the final step. He has set out on a journey to the Pedagogues, to ask them for able artists, only a very few. The arts are the salt of the earth; as salt is to food, so are the arts to technical science. We want from art only enough to insure that our handicrafts will remain in good taste.

All in all, a permanent link with that pedagogic institution will prove very useful and helpful to us. We must labor, and cannot be concerned with education. But to attract educated people to us must be our highest obligation.

A thousand and one reflections come to mind here. But allow me, as is our old custom, to offer just one more general thought, occasioned by a passage in your letter to Lenardo. Devotion to family is a principle from which we do not wish to withhold the praise it deserves. It forms the basis of the individual's security, upon which ultimately rest the stability and the dignity of the whole. But it is no longer sufficient. We must form the concept of devotion to the larger world, put our genuine humanitarian concerns into practice on a broad scale, and further the good not only of those close to us but of all mankind.

And now, finally, to come to your petition; I have this to say: Montan presented it to us promptly. Strange fellow that he is, he refused to explain just what you intended, but gave his word as a friend that it made sense and, if successful, would be most useful to society. And so you are forgiven for likewise treating it as a secret in your missive. In short, you are hereby released from all restrictions, as you should have been informed before this, had we known your whereabouts. I therefore repeat in the name of us all that on the basis of our confidence in Montan and yourself, we approve your goal, albeit undisclosed. Travel about, stop when you wish, move along again, abide! Whatever you achieve cannot fail to be good. May you form yourself into the most essential link in our chain!

In conclusion, I am sending along a little chart which should enable you to find the shifting center of our communications. In it you will see clearly laid out where your letters should be sent at each season of the year. They should preferably be conveyed by trustworthy couriers, of whom enough are designated in various places. Similarly you will find signs indicating where you are to seek out one or another of our company.

Interpolation

At this point we find ourselves in the position of announcing to the reader an intermission, and indeed one of several years, for which

reason we should have liked to end the volume here, had that been compatible with the typographic conventions.

However, the space between two chapters will doubtless suffice to carry us over the appropriate span of time, since we are long accustomed to allowing that sort of thing to happen between the falling and the rising of the curtain in our presence.

In this second book we have seen our old friends' relationships significantly enhanced, and have also made new acquaintances. The prospects are such that it may be hoped that all will turn out as desired for each and every one, provided they find their way into life. We may therefore look forward to encountering them again one after the other, mingling and separating, on paths rough and smooth.

Chapter Eight

If we once more seek out our friend, who for some time has been left to himself, we find him entering the Pedagogic Province, which he has approached from the plains. He traverses pastures and meadows, circles the rim of many a small lake, sees slopes covered more with brush than with trees, and everywhere open vistas of largely undisturbed land. On such paths he was not long in doubt that he was in horse-raising country, and here and there he spied larger or smaller herds of these noble beasts of various breeds and ages. But suddenly the horizon is covered by a frightful cloud of dust which rapidly sweeps nearer and nearer, until it overspreads the entire area. But finally, swept off by a brisk wind from the side, the dust reveals the tumult at its heart.

A horde of the noble beasts is galloping toward him at top speed, driven and kept together by mounted herdsman. The wild throng thunders past the wanderer, a handsome boy amongst the herdsman looks at him with astonishment, reins in, jumps down, and embraces his father.

There is so much to ask, so much to tell; the son reports that he had a difficult time in the probationary period, missed his horse, and had to drag around on foot in field and meadow. Nor did he adapt well to the quiet, toilsome farming life, against which he had protested in advance. To be sure, he enjoyed the harvest festival quite well, but not the subsequent ploughing, harrowing, digging, and waiting. He occupied himself with the necessary and useful domestic animals, but always carelessly and grumpily, until he was finally promoted to the more lively stables. The business of caring for the mares and foals was sometimes tiresome enough, except that seeing a spirited little animal that in three or four years' time might gaily carry one off made it seem

quite a different thing from fussing with calves and piglets, whose whole purpose in life was to be well fed and, once fattened, done away with.

The father could be well pleased with the way the boy had grown, lengthening out to a real youth, with his healthy bearing and with his frank and sprightly, not to say witty, conversation. Both hurried their horses on after the speeding herd, past isolated, extensive farmsteads, until they reached the town or village where the great market was held. There an unbelievable hurly-burly prevails, and it is impossible to say whether the merchandise or the sellers raise more dust. Eager buyers from all over assemble here to acquire creatures of noble pedigree and careful breeding. One thinks one can hear all the world's languages. Amidst the hubbub resounds the lively blare of wind instruments, and everything bespeaks animation, strength, and life.

Once again our wanderer encounters the supervisor he had met previously. He is in the company of other capable men who quietly and inconspicuously maintain propriety and order. Wilhelm, who takes all this for yet another example of exclusive activity and, despite its breadth, a restricted way of life, wishes to learn in what other areas the pupils are trained, lest, engaged in such wild and rather crude occupations as feeding and rearing animals, they should themselves become wild animals. And so he was very glad to hear that precisely this violent and apparently rough vocation was linked with that most refined of studies: the practice and cultivation of languages.

At that moment the father missed his son at his side, but glimpsed him through gaps in the crowd, engaged in lively bargaining with a pedlar boy over some trifles. A short time later, he had disappeared entirely. When the supervisor inquired why he seemed somewhat anxious and distracted, and learned that it was because of his son, the man reassured the father, "Let it go, he is not lost. But you shall see how we keep our charges together." At this he blew hard upon a little whistle hanging around his neck, and promptly dozens of answers sounded from every side. The man continued: "I shall leave it at that. It is only a signal that the supervisor is nearby and wants to know approximately how many can hear him. At the second signal they keep silent but make ready, at the third they answer and rush to me. These signals, by the bye, exist in all sorts of variations, and are particularly useful."

All at once some space had developed around them, and they could speak more freely as they strolled toward the nearby hills. "We had to introduce the study of languages," the supervisor continued, "because we draw boys from all quarters of the globe. In order to prevent what tends to happen abroad, namely that compatriots join together and form factions that isolate them from the other national groups, we try to unite them through facility with languages.

"But most important is general language study, for at this market every foreigner should be able to find ample enjoyment in his own tone and idiom, and also to conduct his bargaining and selling with the utmost ease. But to avert Babylonian confusion and ruination, each month one particular language is universally spoken, the principle being that one should concentrate entirely on whatever element one is to master.

"We view our students," the supervisor said, "all as swimmers who discover to their amazement that the element they expect to engulf them makes them lighter, buoys them up and carries them along, and so it is with every thing that man undertakes.

"Should one of our boys demonstrate a particular fondness for one language or other, in the many quiet, leisurely, solitary, and even tedious hours in what seems like a tumultuous life, careful and thorough instruction is provided. You would find it difficult to recognize our mounted grammarians, some of whom are even real pedants, among these bearded and beardless centaurs. Your Felix has settled upon Italian, and since, as you already know, melodic song pervades all we do, you would hear him sing many a song with delicacy and feeling, during the tedious stretches of his herdsman's life. Activity and industry are much more compatible with sustained study than is generally believed."

Since every region celebrates its own festival, the guest was escorted to the district for instrumental music. Bordering on the plain, it consisted of agreeable and pleasantly varied dales, clusters of slender young trees, and tranquil brooks flowing between occasional mossy rocks. Scattered houses nestled among shrubs were visible on the hillsides, while in gentle hollows the houses pressed closer together. Those pleasantly isolated cottages were far enough apart that neither chords or discord could travel from one to the other.

They approached a wide space, surrounded by buildings and shade trees, where people, crowded shoulder to shoulder, seemed to be waiting with great eagerness and anticipation. Just as the guest arrived, an orchestra of all the instruments was performing a mighty symphony, of astonishing power and delicacy. Opposite the broad platform on which the orchestra was seated was another, which drew special notice. Upon it were students, some older and some younger, all holding their instruments ready, but not playing; they were the ones who were not able or did not dare to join in with the rest. It was touching to see how they held themselves in readiness, and to hear the proud statement that a festival like this seldom ended without one or another's talent suddenly coming to the fore.

When voices were heard singing along with the instruments, there could be no doubt left that this was also favored. In response to his

query as to what other branch of study had a special affinity with music, the wanderer learned that it was poetry, specifically lyric poetry. The chief consideration was that both arts be cultivated, each alone and for its own sake, but then also in conjunction and in contrast with each other. The pupils learn each of these arts within its own constraints; then they are taught how they mutually determine one another, and then again how each liberates the other.

The musician uses measures and rhythm to correspond to meter in poetry. But here music quickly proves its superiority to poetry, for if in poetry, as is right and necessary, quantity is kept as pure as possible, for the musician few syllables are unequivocally long or short. He destroys the most carefully wrought lines of the poet as he likes; he can even convert prose into song, which opens up the most remarkable possibilities. The poet would soon feel himself reduced to nought, did he not know how to inspire respect in the musician through the lyrical delicacy and boldness of his art, and how to evoke new emotions, now in the gentlest succession, now by the most abrupt of transitions.

The singers found here are mostly poets themselves. The elements of dance are also taught, so that all these accomplishments may be distributed evenly through every region.

When the guest was escorted across the next border, he suddenly saw a completely different manner of building. Here the houses were no longer scattered, no longer cottage-like; rather they were grouped together in a regular pattern, their exteriors splendid and handsome, their interiors spacious, comfortable, and elegant. One became aware of a generously laid out, solidly constructed town, befitting the natural setting. This was the home of the plastic arts and the related crafts, and a special calm reigned in these spaces.

The plastic artist regards all of man's deeds and thoughts as his province, yet his profession is solitary and, by the strangest of contradictions, demands lively surroundings perhaps more than any other. Here each shapes in silence what will soon occupy men's eyes forever. A Sabbath stillness prevails through the entire town, and did one not hear the stone mason's pick now and then or the measured hammer blows of the carpenters busily working to complete some magnificent building, not the slightest sound would have stirred the air.

Our wanderer was struck by the earnestness, the remarkable rigor with which both beginners and more advanced pupils were treated. It seemed as though no one accomplished anything by his own powers, but as if a mysterious spirit animated each and every one, and guided them toward a single lofty end. Nowhere did one see rough designs or sketches; every line was drawn with deliberation. When the wanderer asked his guide for an explanation of the entire procedure, he was told: the imagination in itself is a vague, unstable faculty, whereas the merit

of the plastic artist is that he learns to make it precise, to hold it fast, and finally to imbue it with reality.

Mention was made of the necessity for firm principles in other arts. "Would the musician allow a student to pluck the strings wildly, or to invent intervals at his own whim and pleasure? What is striking here is that nothing is left to the free will of the learner. The element in which he is to function is already fixed, the tool he is to employ is handed to him, even the manner in which he is to use it—I mean the fingering—is prescribed, so that the fingers do not get in each other's way, but each prepares the way for the next. Only this regulated co-ordination, finally, makes the impossible possible.

"But the greatest justification for our strict demands and our insistence on definite rules is this: that it is precisely the genius, the person with inborn talent, who grasps them most promptly and obeys them most willingly. Only the mediocre talent wishes to enthrone his limited individuality in the place of the absolute and gloss over his bungling by pretending it represents ungovernable originality and independence. But we do not allow this sort of thing; we guard our students from all those missteps by which a good portion of life, and sometimes an entire life, can be thrown into confusion and fragmented.

"We like best dealing with the genius, for this sort is always blessed with the ability to recognize promptly what is good for him. He understands that art is called art precisely because it is not Nature. He is able to respect even what one might call conventional; for what does this mean other than that the most outstanding men have agreed to consider as best that which is essential, indispensable. And is this standard not always conducive to happiness?

"Here, as elsewhere in our realm, the task of the teacher is greatly aided by the three forms of reverence, and by their signs, which have been introduced and impressed on the pupils, with slight modifications according to the prevailing activity."

As our wanderer was shown around, he was astonished that the city seemed to stretch on and on, with one street leading to another, affording a great variety of vistas. The exteriors of the buildings expressed their purpose unambiguously; they were dignified and stately, beautiful without being ornate. The more noble and solemn ones at the center of the city gave way to buildings of a brighter character, until finally charming suburbs in a graceful style extended into the open fields, ending in a scattering of summerhouses.

The wanderer could not help remarking that the dwellings of the musicians in the previous region were in no way to be compared in beauty and size to these houses inhabited by painters, sculptors, and architects. He was told that this lay in the nature of the case. The musician had always to be turned in on himself, to cultivate his inner

sensibility, in order to project it outward. "He does not have to please his sense of sight. For the eye tends to take precedence over the ear, and lures the spirit out of itself. The artist, by contrast, must live in the external world and express his inner spirit almost unconsciously, in and through visible forms. Plastic artists must live like kings and gods; how else could they build and decorate for kings and gods? They must ultimately raise themselves so far above anything common that the entire community feels itself ennobled in and through their work."

Our friend then sought the explanation of another paradox: why, when the other regions were celebrating these festival days in such stimulating, tumultuous fashion, did such silence reign and work not cease?

"A plastic artist," he was told, "needs no festival, for to him the entire year is a festival. If he has created something excellent, it stands there before his own eyes, before the eyes of the entire world. There is no need for repetition, for renewed exertion, for fresh realization, such as plagues the musician, who consequently must be allowed to have the most splendid of celebrations before the largest of audiences."

"Still," Wilhelm replied, "it would be desirable to have an exhibition during this period, where the progress of the best students over the past three years could be contemplated with pleasure and evaluated."

"In other places," the answer was, "an exhibition may be necessary, but not here. Our entire nature and existence is exhibition. You see here buildings of every sort, all of them the work of our students, constructed, to be sure, from plans discussed and reconsidered hundreds of times; for the builder must not be groping about and experimenting. Whatever is to remain standing must stand properly, and must at least suffice, if not for eternity, then for a long time. To err is human, but errors must not be built.

"Sculptors we treat more leniently and painters most leniently of all; they may try out one thing or another, each according to his genre. It is up to them to choose a space they wish to decorate, whether on the insides or outsides of the buildings, or in the public squares. They propose their ideas to us, and if they are reasonably acceptable, they are allowed to execute them, and in one of two possible ways: either with the dispensation that sooner or later the work may be removed if the artist himself is displeased with it, or with the condition that once installed it cannot be moved. Most of our students choose the first alternative, and take advantage of that permission, which is always the most advisable course. The second case occurs more rarely, and it is evident that the artists then feel less sure of themselves and hold long conferences with their fellows and with experts, and thereby manage to produce real works of lasting value."

After all this, Wilhelm did not fail to inquire what other subject might be paired here, and was told that it was poetry, specifically epic poetry.

But it did seem strange to our friend when he learned further that the pupils were not allowed to read or to recite the completed poems of ancient or more modern poets. They were given only laconic versions of a series of myths, traditions, and legends. In the artistic or poetic treatment of such material one can quickly recognize the unique generative qualities of a talent devoted to either of those arts. Poets and plastic artists both draw from the same source, and each tries to channel the stream toward his side, to direct it to his own advantage, to further his own ends; he succeeds far better this way than by reworking something that has already been worked.

Our traveler had the opportunity to see this in practice. A group of painters was at work in a room, while a sprightly young comrade narrated a very simple story in great detail, using almost as many words as the others did brush strokes, so as to round out his presentation as completely as possible.

Wilhelm was assured that while working together the students entertained each other delightfully, and thus often improvisers emerged who could stimulate great enthusiasm for this double approach.

Our friend now turned his inquiries back to the plastic arts. "Since you have no exhibitions," he asked, "have you also no competitions?" "In fact we do not," his informant replied, "but here nearby we can let you see what we consider more useful."

They entered a large hall, pleasingly illuminated from above. Here they saw first a large circle of busy artists, in the center of which rose a monumental group, admirably arranged. Powerful figures of men and women in drastic postures recalled that glorious battle between the youthful heroes and the Amazons, in which hatred and enmity were ultimately resolved in mutual trust and assistance. The intricately entwined figures of the group showed to equal advantage from every angle. Artists sat or stood all about around the monument, each at work in his own way, painting at the easel, sketching at the drawing board, modeling in the round or in bas relief. There were even architects designing the pedestal on which such a work of art would later be mounted. Each participant reproduced the subject in his own fashion. The painters and sketchers developed the group in one plane, but carefully, so as not to spoil it but to preserve as much as possible. The reliefs were handled in the same way. Only one artist had repeated the group on a smaller scale, and he seemed to have even surpassed the original sometimes in the shaping of the limbs and the rendering of certain movements.

It now emerged that this one was the master, who would eventually execute the piece in marble. Before doing so, he was submitting the model to a practical examination, carefully observing and incorporating, after full consideration, and to his own benefit, all that his fellow artists had perceived, preserved, or altered in it. Thus when the great work was finally completed in marble, even though it had been undertaken, designed, and executed by a single person, it would seem to belong to all of them.

The greatest silence reigned in the room, but the supervisor raised his voice and called, "Which of you here, in the presence of this static object, will rouse the imagination with well chosen words, so that everything we see fixed here may become fluid again, without losing its character, in order to prove to us that what the sculptor has captured is the most worthy image?"

Called upon by all, a handsome youth left his work, and stepping forward, commenced a quiet discourse, in which he seemed at first merely to describe the sculpture before them. It was not long, however, before he plunged into the actual realm of poetry, diving into the midst of the action and commanding this element admirably. Little by little his glorious declamation brought the performance to such a pitch that the rigid group seemed to revolve on its axis, and the figures seemed to double and triple in number. Wilhelm stood there entranced, and at length exclaimed, "Who can resist breaking into song and metrical verse!"

"I should object to that," the supervisor replied, "for if our excellent sculptor is honest, he will admit that he finds our poet hard to take, precisely because these two artists are the farthest apart. On the other hand, I would wager that one or another of the painters has appropriated certain lively touches from it.

"But I would like to let our friend hear a gentle, convivial song, one that you all sing so solemnly and sweetly. It ranges over all of art, and I myself am always edified when I hear it."

After a pause in which they waved to each other and conferred by gestures, there resounded from all sides the following noble song, uplifting to heart and mind:

To invent, to make decisions,
Artist, solitude is best;
To take pleasure in your mission,
Gather gaily with the rest!
Now, together, see and hear
What your own life's course has been,
And the deeds of year on year
In your fellow man be seen.

First the thought, and then the sketching,
Then the figures fitly massed,
One the other clearer etching,
And declare an end at last!
Well conceived with shrewd device,
Fairly shaped and smoothly done,
Artists in such artful wise
Ever have their power won.

Nature in her many guises
Shows a single God to man,
Through art's many enterprises
Weaves but one eternal strand.
This is nothing but the Truth;
Decked alone with Beauty bright,
She awaits eternal youth,
Clarity and highest light.

Orators' and poets' raptures
Issue forth in rhyme and prose,
So the painter's canvas captures
All life's beauty in the rose—
Sisters round about her gleaming,
Harvest fruit on either side,
Showing forth the secret meaning
Of the world where we abide.

Thousandfold in beauty bright
Form on form flows from your hand,
Joyous wonder's your delight:
God in human form's at hand.
And whatever tool you wield,
Stand together brothers all;
And as song our offsprings yield,
Rising from the altar tall.

Wilhelm was willing to grant all of this, although it seemed to him thoroughly paradoxical, indeed, had he not seen it with his own eyes, completely impossible. Since it was all presented to him frankly and freely, however, in clear order, there was scarcely need for questions in order to learn more. Nevertheless, in the end he did not refrain from addressing his guide as follows: "I see that wise provision has been made for everything that may seem desirable in life. But tell me: in which of your regions is a similar concern shown for dramatic

poetry, and where might I learn more about that? I have looked around at all your buildings and find none that seemed intended for such a purpose."

"In response to this question, we cannot conceal that no such building exists in our entire province. For the drama assumes an idle crowd, perhaps even a mob, such as does not exist amongst us; riffraff of this sort, if it does not leave in disgust on its own, is transported over the border. You may be sure, however, that so important a point was carefully considered, since our institute aims at the general welfare. But no region seemed right; everywhere significant reservations appeared. Who among our pupils would lightly undertake to induce false and unsuitable emotions in his fellows with sham merriment or feigned grief, and all to produce varying, but always dubious pleasures. We found such impostures thoroughly dangerous, and could not reconcile them with our serious purpose."

"But it is said," Wilhelm replied, "that this all-embracing art furthers the others."

"By no means," was the response. "It makes use of all the others, but corrupts them. I do not blame the actor for taking up with the painter; but in such company the painter is lost."

"The actor will unscrupulously utilize for his ephemeral purposes whatever art and life offer him, and with no little profit. The painter, on the other hand, would also like to gain some advantage from the theater, but finds himself always at a disadvantage, and the same is true of the musician. The arts seem to me like siblings, most of whom incline toward good management, except for one frivolous one who wants to appropriate and consume the family's entire worldly goods. Such is the case with the theater. It has dubious origins, which it can never completely deny, whether as an art, as craft, or as pastime."

Wilhelm looked down with a deep sigh, for he was suddenly reminded of all the joys and sorrows he had experienced in and from the theater. He blessed the pious men who had been wise enough to spare their charges such pain, and out of conviction and principle had banished these dangers from their domain.

His companion, however, did not leave him much time for such reflections, but continued, "Since our highest and most sacred principle is not to misdirect any ability or talent, we cannot conceal from ourselves that among so great a number some will have a natural gift for mimicry. It manifests itself in an irrepressible joy in imitating the characters, figures, movement, and speech of others. We do not encourage this, to be sure, but we observe the pupil closely, and should he remain true to his nature, we have established connections with great theaters the world over and will forthwith send a boy of proven

abilities there, so that, like a duck in water, he can be initiated on the boards without delay into his future of waddling and quacking."

Wilhelm listened to this patiently, but was only half convinced and perhaps somewhat annoyed. For man is so oddly constituted that he may indeed be convinced of the worthlessness of some beloved object, may turn from it and even execrate it, but nevertheless does not want to see it treated in similar manner by others. And perhaps the spirit of contradiction that dwells in all men never shows itself more vigorously and effectively than in such a case.

The editor of these pages might himself confess that he has allowed this odd passage to slip by with some reluctance. For has not he also in various senses expended more life and energy on the theater than is proper? And is he now to be persuaded that this was an unforgivable error, a fruitless effort?

But we have no time to dwell on such painful memories and afterthoughts, for our friend is agreeably surprised to see one of the Three, and in fact an especially engaging one of them, coming toward him. Sympathetic mildness, expressive of the purest peace of mind, emanated from him. Our wanderer could approach him with trust and feel his trust reciprocated.

Now Wilhelm learned that the Head was presently at the sanctuaries, and was there giving instruction, teaching and dispensing blessings. The Three had meanwhile dispersed to visit the various regions, and in each place, after consulting with the subordinate supervisors and acquainting themselves thoroughly with the facts, they furthered what had been initiated and put the directives into effect; they thereby faithfully carried out their high responsibility.

This same excellent person now gave him a more general overview of their internal situation and outside connections, as well as some knowledge of the interactions of the various regions. It also became clear how, after a longer or shorter period, a pupil might be transferred from one region to another. Suffice it to say that all this coincided perfectly with what Wilhelm had already heard. At the same time, the report on his son gave him great pleasure, and the plan for the latter's further education earned his complete approbation.

Chapter Nine

Wilhelm was now invited by the assistant and the supervisor to a miners' festival that was about to be celebrated. They ascended the mountain with some difficulty, and Wilhelm even thought he noticed that the guide moved more slowly as evening set in, as if not fearing

the darkness would place an even greater impediment in their path. But when a deep night surrounded them, this mystery was solved: for he saw tiny flames flickering and bobbing out of clefts and valleys, extending into lines that swarmed over the mountaintops. Here was a phenomenon far friendlier than when a volcano erupts, spewing out a tumult that threatens whole regions with destruction, and yet the light gradually blazed brighter, spreading and intensifying, twinkling like a river of stars, mild and lovely, to be sure, but extending boldly over the entire region.

After his escort had enjoyed for a time the astonishment of his guest—for their faces and figures were illuminated by the distant light, as was their path—he began to speak: “You see before you, to be sure, an odd spectacle. These lights, which burn and work underground night and day all year long, assisting in the extraction of hidden, scarcely accessible treasures of the earth, now they are welling up and streaming forth from their recesses, and lighting up the apparent night. Few have ever witnessed so delightful a parade, in which this useful enterprise, dispersed underground far from all eyes, emerges in all its amplitude and reveals a large, secret association.”

Amidst such talk and observations, they had reached the place where the rivulets of flame converged to form a lake of fire around a brightly lit island of space. The traveler stood now in the blinding circle, where thousands of dancing lights formed a portentous contrast to the black wall of bearers lined up in a row. At once the merriest music rang out to accompany hearty singing. Hollow masses of rock advanced mechanically, opening to disclose a glittering interior to the delighted eyes of the beholder. Pantomime and whatever else might amuse the multitude at such a moment combined to arouse and simultaneously satisfy the attention.

But what amazement filled our friend when he was introduced to the dignitaries and saw among them friend Jarno, in solemn imposing miner’s garb. “Not for nothing,” the other exclaimed, “have I traded my previous name for the more significant one of Montan. You find me here initiated into mountain and chasm, and happier in this limitation, beneath and above the earth, than anyone could imagine.”

“Now that you are so expert,” replied the wanderer, “you will be more generous with explanations and instruction than you were toward me back on those peaks and cliffs.”

“By no means,” answered Montan. “The mountains are silent masters, and they train silent pupils.”

After the ceremony the crowd dined at many tables. All of the guests, whether invited or uninvited, were of the trade, so that at the table where Montan and his friend had seated themselves, a conversation proper to the place sprang up; there was extensive discussion of moun-

tains, veins and deposits, of the types of veins and ores in the region. But the conversation soon became more general, and then the talk was of nothing less than the creation and origin of the earth. But here the conversation did not long remain peaceful, but rather developed at once into a lively dispute.

Several wanted to derive the present form of our earth from the gradual recession of the waters covering the world; in support they cited the remains of once living inhabitants of the oceans to be found in the highest mountains, as well as on plateaus. Others, of more violent disposition, began with heating and melting, even an all-per-vading fire, which, when it had done its work on the surface, retreated into the depths, where it still manifested itself in volcanos raging on land and sea, and formed the highest mountains through successive eruptions and repeated discharges of lava. They urged those of the other camp to consider that there could be no heat without fire, and that an active fire always presupposed a source. However much this corresponded to experience, some were not satisfied with it. They maintained that mighty formations already completed in the bowels of the earth had been extruded through the earth's crust by irresistible elastic forces; and in the course of these convulsions various pieces of them had been shattered and strewn near and far. They adduced many phenomena that could not be explained without this assumption.

A fourth, if perhaps not numerous, party, scoffed at all these futile attempts and maintained that many features of the earth's surface could never be explained unless it was allowed that greater and lesser segments of mountain could have fallen from the sky and covered great broad stretches of the landscape. They adduced the larger and smaller masses of rock found strewn over many lands, which even in our own day were believed to have fallen from above.

Finally two or three quiet guests invoked a period of fierce cold, when glaciers descended from the highest mountain ranges far into the land, forming in effect slides for ponderous masses of primeval rock, which were propelled farther and farther over the glassy track. In the subsequent period of thaw, these rocks had sunk deep into the ground, to remain forever locked in alien territory. In addition, the transport of huge blocks of stone from the north might have been made possible by moving ice floes. However, the somewhat cool views of these good people did not make much headway. The general opinion was that it was far more natural to have the world be created with colossal crashes and upheavals, wild raging and fiery catapulting. And since the heat of the wine was now adding its strong effect, the glorious celebration might almost have ended in fatal clashes.

Our friend felt quite bewildered and dejected, for he had long secretly cherished the spirit moving over the waters and the great flood which

had risen fifteen ells above the highest mountaintop. After this strange talk his well-ordered, fertile, and populated world seemed to collapse into chaos before his mind's eye.

The following morning he did not fail to question the serious Montan about it, exclaiming, "I could not understand you yesterday, for among all those strange things people were saying, I hoped to hear at last your opinion and your position. Instead you were now on one side, now on another, always attempting to bolster the arguments of whoever was talking at the moment. But now tell me seriously what you think and what you know about all this."

Hereupon Montan replied, "I know as much as they do, and prefer not to think about it at all."

"But," Wilhelm objected, "there are so many contradictory opinions, and we are always told that the truth lies in the middle."

"By no means," Montan answered. "The problem lies in the middle, unfathomable perhaps, perhaps also accessible, if you give it a try."

After they had discussed a little more back and forth in this fashion, Montan said confidently, "You reproach me with supporting everyone in his opinion, as indeed there is always an additional argument to be found for everything. It is true, I added to the confusion, but in fact I cannot take the human race very seriously anymore. I am thoroughly convinced that everyone must cherish for himself, with utmost seriousness, that which he holds dearest, which is to say, his convictions. Each of us knows what he knows only for himself, and he must keep it secret. As soon as he articulates it, contradiction rears its head, and when he engages in conflict, he loses his inner equilibrium, and his best qualities are, if not extinguished, at least badly disturbed."

Challenged by Wilhelm's response, Montan explained further: "Once you know what truly matters, you cease to be loquacious." "But what does truly matter?" inquired Wilhelm impetuously. "That is easily said," the other replied. "Thought and action, action and thought, that is the sum of all wisdom, known from time immemorial, practiced from time immemorial, not realized by all. Both must always alternate in life, like breathing out and breathing in. Like question and answer, neither should occur without the other. Whoever takes as his law what the spirit of human reason whispers in the ear of every newborn babe, to test action by thought and thought by action, cannot go astray, or if he should, he will soon find his way back to the right path."

Montan now gave his friend a tour of the mining area, and they were greeted everywhere with a hearty "Good fortune to ye," which greeting was cheerily returned. "I should sometimes like," Montan remarked, "to answer them with 'Good sense to ye,' for sense is better than fortune. Yet the masses always have sense enough, if their superiors are blessed with it. Since I am here, if not to command, at

least to advise, I have endeavored to learn the characteristics of this range. The metals it contains are passionately sought after. I have tried to explain their occurrence, and have succeeded. It is not good fortune alone, but sense, which summons good fortune to regulate it. How these mountains here came to be, I do not know, nor do I care to. But I seek continually to wrest from them the secret of their individuality. The search is on for the lead and silver hidden in their bosom. I know how to discover them. The how I keep to myself, and merely indicate where to find what is sought. At my word the attempt is made, it succeeds, and I am called lucky. What I understand, I understand for myself; where I succeed, the success accrues to others. And no one imagines that he could succeed in the same way. They suspect me of having a divining rod, but they do not notice that they contradict me when I make a sensible proposal—not realizing that they are closing off the road to the Tree of Knowledge, where these prophetic branches are to be cut.”

Encouraged by these discussions and persuaded that, in his own previous thoughts and actions, he had successfully met the spirit of his friend's principles in a very different profession, Wilhelm now gave Montan an account of how he had employed his time since receiving the dispensation to arrange his assigned journey not by days and hours but in accordance with his true goal of obtaining thorough training.

As it fell out, there was no need of much talk, for a significant occurrence gave our friend an opportunity to apply his acquired talent cleverly and successfully, and to show himself truly useful to society.

But in what manner this was, we may not at the moment disclose, although the reader will soon be sufficiently informed, indeed before he puts down this volume.

Chapter Ten

Hersilie to Wilhelm

For many years I have been reproached by all and sundry that I am an odd, capricious girl. If I am, it is not my fault. People had to have patience with me, and now I must have patience with myself, with my imagination, which parades father and son, now together, now alternately, back and forth before my eyes. I see myself as an innocent Alcmena, continuously plagued by two beings who represent one another.

I have a great deal to tell you, yet it seems to me I write to you only when I have an adventure to recount; all the rest is, to be sure, adventurous enough, yet not an adventure. So now for today's:

I am sitting under the tall lindens, putting the finishing touches on a little portfolio, an exquisite one, without exactly knowing who should have it, the father or the son, but surely one or the other. Along comes a young pedlar with baskets and caskets. He modestly identifies himself with an official certificate permitting him to hawk his wares on estates. I look over his things, down to the endless trifles which no one needs and which everyone buys out of a childish urge to possess and to squander. The boy seems to be observing me attentively. Beautiful dark eyes, somewhat cunning, well-shaped eyebrows, rich curls, gleaming rows of teeth, in short, you understand, an oriental type.

He asks various questions concerning members of the family to whom he might possibly sell something. Through all sorts of maneuvers, he manages to make me say my name. "Hersilie," he says modestly, "will Hersilie forgive me if I deliver a message?" I look at him in wonder, and he brings out the tiniest of slates with a little white frame, such as children in the mountains use when first learning to write. I take it, see writing on it, and read the following inscription, neatly lettered with a sharp stylus:

"Felix
loves
Hersilie.
The equerry
will soon come."

I am taken aback, am greatly astonished at what I hold in my hand, see with my own eyes, but most of all at the fact that Fate seems about to prove itself even odder than I am myself. "What is this supposed to mean?" I ask myself, and the little rogue is more present to me than ever; indeed, it is as though his image were boring itself into my eyes.

Now it is my turn to ask questions, and I receive strange, unsatisfactory answers. I interrogate and learn nothing. I ponder and cannot make sense of my thoughts. At last I piece together from statements and contradictions this much, that the young pedlar had passed through the Pedagogic Province, that he had won the confidence of my young admirer, who had written the inscription on a slate he had purchased, and had promised him the finest gifts in return for a word of reply. He thereupon handed me a similar slate, of which he had several in his pack, as well as a stylus, and pressed and besought me so sweetly that I took them both, thought, thought again, could think of nothing, and wrote:

"Hersilie's

greeting
to Felix.
May the equerry
be well."

I looked at what I had written and was annoyed at its ineptness. Neither tenderness nor intelligence nor wit, merely embarrassment, and why? I was standing before a boy, writing to a boy—should that upset me? I do believe I sighed and was about to erase what I had written, but the boy took it so charmingly from my hand and asked me for some protective wrapping, and so it happened—I know not how it happened—that I put the slate into the portfolio, tied its ribbon, and handed it, thus enclosed, to the boy, who received it gracefully and, with a deep bow, hesitated a moment, so that I had just time to press my little purse into his hand, while reproaching myself that I was not giving him enough. He departed with all due speed, and when I looked after him, he had already vanished, I could not tell quite how.

Now it is over; I am already back on the usual dull ground of everyday existence again, and can hardly believe in the apparition. Yet do I not hold the slate in my hand? It is quite charming, the lettering beautifully and carefully done. I think I might have kissed it, did I not fear to obliterate the writing.

I have given myself some time, after writing the above; but no matter how I think about it, I remain at an impasse. Certainly there was something mysterious about the figure. There is hardly a novel these days without that sort of character; are we now to meet up with them in real life as well? Likeable, yet suspicious, strange, yet inspiring trust? Why did he leave before the confusion could be unraveled? Why did I not have sufficient presence of mind to detain him in some suitable way?

After an intermission I again take pen in hand to continue my confessions. This determined, persisting affection in a boy on his way to young manhood was flattering; but it occurred to me that it was not rare to be attracted at such an age to an older woman. Indeed, younger men are mysteriously drawn to older women. In other cases, when it did not involve me, I laughed at it and give it a spiteful construction: that it was a reminiscence of infantile or nursling tenderness, from which they had barely torn themselves away. Now it aggravates me to think about it in such terms; I reduce our good Felix to a child, and I, too, do not appear to myself in any too favorable light. Ah, what a difference it makes whether we are judging ourselves or others.

Chapter Eleven

Wilhelm to Natalie

For days now I have been going about, unable to resolve to take up my pen. There is much to say; in conversation one point would dovetail with the other, one subject would easily flow out of another. Since I am far away, let me begin with generalities; they will eventually lead me to the peculiar things I have to impart.

You have heard the story of the youth, who, strolling along the seashore, found an oarlock; the interest he took in it moved him to acquire an oar, as a necessary complement to it. But this, too, was of no use; he set his heart on a boat, and managed to get one. Yet boat, oar, and oarlock did not take him very far; he provided himself with masts and sails, and so little by little with everything requisite for speed and comfort in boating. Striving purposefully, he achieves greater knowledge and skill. Fortune smiles upon him, and he finally finds himself the master and owner of a larger vessel; his success multiplies, and he becomes prosperous, respected, and renowned among seamen.

Even as I give you occasion to reread this charming story, I must confess that it has bearing here only in the most remote sense; yet it smooths the way for what I have to say. Meanwhile I must proceed by way of matters even more distant.

The powers inherent in the human being may be divided into the general and the specific. The general are to be regarded as neutral, latent powers which in some circumstances come to life and are directed by chance toward one goal or another. The human gift of imitation is general—man wishes to emulate, to copy what he sees, even without the least internal or external means to the end in question. It is therefore natural to wish to accomplish what one sees others accomplish. But the most natural thing would be for the son to take up his father's occupation. Here everything comes together: powers whose specific character and original direction may perhaps be inborn, then consistent, step-by-step practice and a developed skill that would oblige us to continue on the chosen path, even though other urges might develop in us, and free choice might lead us to another calling, for which Nature has given us neither capacity nor persistence. Thus on average those people are the happiest who find the opportunity to cultivate hereditary family talent within a domestic circle. We know of such dynasties of painters; there were, to be sure, weak talents among them, but even these produced something that was useful and perhaps

better than if they had chosen to work with their limited talents in some other field.

But since this, too, is not what I wished to say, I must try to approach my revelations from some other angle.

The sad thing about being far from friends is that we cannot instantaneously join and connect thoughts by means of those intermediary and auxiliary elements that develop on both sides and weave back and forth as quick as lightning when we are together. Here, then, to begin with, a story from my early youth.

We children, raised in an old, solemn town, had grasped the notions of streets and squares, of walls, and then also of ramparts, the glacis, and nearby walled gardens. But to take us, or even more themselves, out into Nature, our parents had long ago planned, but repeatedly postponed, an excursion to friends in the country. Finally at Whitsuntide came a more pressing invitation and suggestion, accepted only under the condition that everything be arranged so that we could return home by nightfall; for it seemed utterly impossible to sleep anywhere but in one's own accustomed bed. It was of course difficult thus to condense the pleasures of the day; two friends were to be visited and their claims for all too rare company satisfied. Nevertheless, it was hoped that with strict punctuality everything could be accomplished.

On the third day of Whitsun, then, everyone was up and ready at the crack of dawn; the carriage drew up at the appointed time, and we had soon left all the restriction of streets, gates, bridges, and moats behind us. A free, open world spread out before our unaccustomed eyes. The green of the grain fields and meadows, newly refreshed by the night's rain, the somewhat lighter green of the recently opened buds of bushes and trees, the blinding white of tree blossoms spreading in every direction—all of this gave us a foretaste of happy, blissful hours.

We arrived punctually at our first stop, the home of a worthy pastor. After the warmest of welcomes we soon realized that the benefits of the missed church celebration were not being denied to spirits in search of tranquility and freedom. With joyful interest I beheld a rural household for the first time. Plow and harrow, wagons and carts showed unmistakable signs of use, and even the disgusting looking manure seemed the most indispensable part of the entire operation—it had been collected carefully and stored almost daintily. But our eager attention to these new, yet comprehensible, sights was soon directed to more immediate pleasures: tasty cakes, fresh milk, and many other country delicacies drew our avid consideration. The children then left

the little kitchen garden and the hospitable arbor and scampered off to the nearby copse, to carry out a task given them by a well-meaning old aunt. They were to gather as many cowslips as possible, and bring them faithfully back to town, where the resourceful matron was wont to prepare all kinds of wholesome beverages from them.

While we ran hither and thither over the meadows, banks, and hedgerows in this occupation, several village children joined us, and the lovely scent of the spring flowers we had gathered seemed to become ever more invigorating and fragrant.

By now we had picked such a mass of stalks and blossoms that we did not know what to do with them; we began plucking off the yellowish flower heads, for this was really the only part that mattered. Each tried to fill his hat or cap with as many as possible.

The older of the boys, however, only a little ahead of me in age, the son of the fisherman, did not seem to enjoy this fooling with the flowers. He was a boy to whom I had been especially drawn as soon as he had appeared, and he now invited me to go with him down to the river, which, already of considerable width, flowed not far off. We settled down with fishing rods in a shady spot where scores of little fish darted back and forth in the deep, still, clear water. He kindly showed me what to do, how to bait my line, and I succeeded a few times running in jerking the smallest of these delicate creatures against their will up into the air. As we sat there calmly, leaning against each other, he seemed to grow bored, and called my attention to a sandy spit that stretched out into the water on our side. It would make an excellent bathing place. He could not resist the temptation, he exclaimed, leaping to his feet, and before I knew it was down below, undressed, and in the water.

Since he was an excellent swimmer, he soon left the shallow spot, entrusted himself to the current, and came up toward me, in the deeper water. A very strange mood had come over me. Grasshoppers danced around me, ants scurried about, colorful beetles hung in the branches, and gold-glittering dragonflies, for so he had called them, hovered and fluttered, phantomlike, at my feet, just as the boy, pulling a large crab from a tangle of roots, held it up gaily for me to see, then skillfully concealed it again in its old place, ready for the catch. It was so hot and sultry all around that one longed to be out of the sun and in the shade, then out of the cool of the shade and down into the cooler water. So it was easy for him to lure me down. He did not have to repeat his invitation often, for I found it irresistible and felt, despite some fear of my parents, as well as wariness toward the unknown element, extraordinary excitement. But once I undressed on the sand, I cautiously ventured into the water, though no farther than the gently sloping bottom permitted. He let me linger there, moved away in the

buoyant element, then swam back, and as he climbed out and stood up to dry off in the light of the sun, I thought my eyes were dazzled by a triple sun: so beautiful was the human form, of which I had never had any notion. He seemed to look at me with the same attention. Quickly dressed, we still faced each other without veils. Our hearts were drawn to one another, and with fiery kisses we swore eternal friendship.

Then running, running we reached the house, just in time, for the company was setting out on an hour and a half's walk along the pleasantest path imaginable through bushes and forest to the home of the magistrate. My friend accompanied me; we already seemed inseparable. But when at the halfway-point I asked permission to take him along to the magistrate's house, the pastor's wife refused, quietly remarking that it was not proper. Instead she commissioned him urgently to tell his father, when he returned, that she absolutely must have some fine crabs waiting when she returned, since she wished to give the guests this specialty to take back to town. The boy departed, but promised by word and gesture that he would await me late in the afternoon at this spot in the woods.

Then our party reached the magistrate's, where we encountered another country household, but of a higher order. The delay of the midday meal through the overzealousness of our hostess did not make me impatient, since the daughter of the house, somewhat younger than I, accompanied me to the well-tended flower garden for a walk that I found highly enjoyable. Spring flowers of all kinds stood in neatly laid-out beds, either filling them or decorating their borders. My companion was pretty, blond, and gentle; we were at ease with one another, soon took each other's hands and seemed to wish for nothing more. Thus we strolled past tulip beds, past rows of narcissus and jonquils; she showed me places where magnificent hyacinths had just finished blooming. But provision had also been made for the seasons to come: the foliage of the coming ranunculi and anemones was already growing green; the care lavished on the numerous staked carnations promised a rich flowering, while even earlier hope was budding in the many-flowered lily stalks judiciously interspersed among the roses. And so many arbors promised soon to offer glorious shade with honeysuckle, jasmine, grapes, and other vines!

When, after so many years, I consider my situation at that time, it seems truly enviable. At the very same moment I was seized by the premonition of friendship and love. For as I reluctantly took leave of the lovely girl, I was comforted by the thought that I could share these feelings with my young friend, confide in him and enjoy his sympathy simultaneously with these fresh, new emotions.

And if I may add another observation, I should confess that in the course of life that first blossoming of the external world struck me as a revelation of Nature herself, compared to which everything else that later touches our senses seems a mere copy, which, however closely it may approach it, still lacks that original spirit and meaning.

How we would despair, seeing the external world so cold, so lifeless, were it not that in our inner self something germinates that transfigures Nature in quite another way, by granting us the creative power to beautify ourselves in her.

It was already dusk when we once more reached the spot in the woods where my young friend had promised to await me. I strained my eyes to make out his presence; when I did not succeed, I impatiently dashed ahead of our slowly moving party, and ran back and forth in the bushes. I called out, I was worried; he was not to be seen and did not answer. For the first time in my life I experienced passionate pain, doubled and redoubled.

There had already sprung up in me an unreasonable need for confiding intimacy; I already had an irresistible longing to free my spirit of the image of that blond girl by talking about her, and to unburden my heart of the feelings she had awakened. My heart was full, my mouth was already murmuring, ready to overflow. Out loud I took that good lad to task for injuring our friendship, for neglecting a promise.

But heavier trials were in store for me. From the first houses of the village women rushed out wailing; howling children followed; no one would answer any questions. We saw a mournful procession round the corner; it moved slowly down the long street. It looked like a funeral procession, but a multiple one; there seemed to be no end of litters and stretchers. The wailing continued, swelled, the crowd grew. "They drowned, all of them drowned, every one. Him? Who? Which one?" The mothers who saw their children around them seemed relieved. But one grave man stepped forward and spoke to the pastor's wife. "Unfortunately I stayed away too long. Adolf drowned, all five of them. He wanted to keep his promise and mine." The man—it was the fisherman himself—passed on, following the procession; we stood shocked and paralyzed. Then a little boy came up, carrying a sack. "Here are the crabs, Mistress Pastor," he said, and held the sign high in the air. We shrank from it, as though from something unutterably destructive. There were questions, inquiries, and this much was learned: this last little fellow had stayed on the bank to gather the crabs thrown to him from below. Finally, but only after repeated questioning, it emerged that Adolf had gone down to and into the river with two sensible boys.

Two others, younger, had joined them unbidden, and were not to be restrained by any scolding or threats. The first group was almost past a stony, dangerous place; the others slipped, grabbed for the older ones, and each dragged down the one ahead of him. This finally happened to the first in line as well, and they all fell into the deep water. Adolf, who was a good swimmer, could have saved himself, but all the others clung to him in their fear, and he was pulled under. The little fellow had then run crying into the village, still clutching his sack of crabs. Along with others who were summoned, the fisherman, who by chance was returning late, rushed to the river. One after the other they were pulled out of the water, dead, and now they were being brought back.

The pastor and my father made their way somberly to the town hall. The full moon had risen and illuminated the paths of death. I followed, vehemently determined. I was not allowed in; I was in a dreadful state. I circled the building without pause. Finally I saw my chance and jumped in through an open window.

In the large hall, which is used for gatherings of every sort, the unfortunates lay stretched out on straw, naked, gleaming white bodies, brilliant even in the dim lamp light. I threw myself upon the largest, my friend. I would not be able to describe my state. I wept bitterly and flooded his broad chest with countless tears. I had heard something about rubbing being helpful in such a case, so I rubbed my tears in, and deceived myself with the warmth I generated. In my confusion I thought of blowing breath into him, but the rows of pearly teeth were firmly clamped shut, and the lips, on which our parting kiss still seemed to linger, refused the slightest sign of response. Despairing of any human help, I turned to prayer; I implored, I prayed; it seemed to me that at this moment I would have to perform a miracle, to call forth the soul still within him or to lure it back if it were still hovering nearby.

They tore me away. Weeping, sobbing, I sat in the carriage, and scarcely noticed what my parents were saying. Our mother, as I was to hear repeated so often afterwards, had accepted it as God's will. I, in the meantime, had fallen asleep and awoke late the next morning, dejected and in a puzzling, bewildered state.

But when I went down to breakfast, I found my mother, my aunt, and the cook, in grave consultation. The crabs were not to be boiled, not to be served; my father would not endure so direct a reminder of the recent misfortune. My aunt seemed most eager to get her hands on these unusual creatures, but still had time to scold me for forgetting to bring back the cowslips. But soon she seemed to calm down on this score, when the gruesome creatures, still alive and crawling all over each other, were placed at her disposal. She thereupon reached agreement with the cook on what to do with them.

But to illuminate the meaning of this scene, I must report some particulars about this woman's character and ways. From the moral point of view, her ruling qualities were in no way laudable; yet from the social and political point of view, they produced various good effects. She was genuinely parsimonious, for she begrudged every last penny that had to leave her hand, and was ever on the lookout for surrogates to supply her needs, either for nothing, by barter or by some other means. Thus the cowslips had been intended for a tea, which she thought healthier than any Chinese variety. God had bestowed on each land whatever it needed, be it for nourishment, seasoning, or medication; there was no need to turn to foreign lands for them. So she raised in her small garden everything which to her mind made food tasty and was wholesome for those who were ill; nor did she ever visit someone else's garden without bringing back something of this sort.

We gladly indulged her in this disposition and its consequent actions, because her diligently accumulated savings were eventually to benefit the rest of the family. Even my father and mother humored her and furthered her efforts in this regard.

But another passion of hers, an active one, which came ceaselessly and officiously to the fore, was the pride she took in being considered an important and influential personage. And she had indeed earned and achieved such fame, for she knew how to turn the otherwise idle, and often even harmful, gossip prevalent among women to her own advantage. She had detailed knowledge of everything that went on in town, and therefore also of the intimate affairs of families, and a dubious situation could hardly arise without her involving herself in it. This was all the easier for her because she aimed only to be of help, yet contrived to enhance her own fame and good name thereby. She had brought about many a marriage, with which at least one of the parties, perhaps, remained satisfied. But what occupied her most was furthering and promoting persons who were seeking some office or appointment. In this way she actually acquired a large number of clients, whose influence she was subsequently able to exploit.

As the widow of a not insignificant official, a strict and upright man, she had learned how trifles can win over those who cannot be swayed by significant offerings.

In order not to stray into further digressions, however, let me observe first that she had managed to obtain considerable influence with a man who occupied an important position. He was as stingy as she, and, unfortunately for him, also a gourmand with a sweet tooth. To bring him a delicious dish, under some pretext or other, was her chief concern. His conscience was not the most tender, but in dubious cases his courage and boldness had to be called on as well, if he was to

overcome the resistance of his colleagues and to silence the voice of duty, which they invoked against him.

As it happened, my aunt was currently favoring an unworthy person. She had already done everything possible to insinuate him; the affair had taken a positive turn, and now the crabs, rarely seen here, came at just the right moment. They were to be fed carefully and brought, a few at a time, to the table of her highly placed patron, who customarily ate his sparse meals all alone.

It should be added that the unfortunate event gave occasion for much discussion and social stir. At that time my father was one of the first who was impelled by a general spirit of benevolence to extend his observations and concern beyond his family and city. He had worked with sensible doctors and police officials to eliminate the great obstacles that had originally stood in the way of vaccination against the small-pox. Better care in the hospitals, more humane treatment of prisoners, and whatever else might be included here constituted the preoccupation, if not of his life, at least of his reading and reflections. And indeed, he expressed his convictions everywhere and did much good thereby.

He viewed civil society, under whatever form of government, as a natural condition that had its good and bad aspects, its normal patterns of life, alternating fat years and lean, and its no less fortuitous and irregular hail storms, floods, and fires. The good was to be seized and put to use, the bad averted or endured. But nothing, he believed, was more desirable than to propagate general goodwill, independent of every other consideration.

As a result of such a disposition he was now impelled to bring forward again a beneficial measure he had previously promoted. This was the resuscitation of those given up for dead, no matter how they might have lost the external signs of life. Listening to these conversations, I learned that the opposite had been attempted and applied in the case of the drowned children, that indeed they had, as it were, been murdered; it was further believed that bleeding might have rescued all of them. In my youthful fervor I therefore vowed secretly to lose no opportunity to master everything that might be necessary in such situations, above all bleeding and other things of that sort.

But how soon ordinary life carried me off. The need for friendship and love had been aroused, and I was always looking for ways to satisfy it. Meanwhile my sensuality, imagination, and mind were excessively occupied with the theater; how far I was led and misled, I must not repeat.

But if after this involved story I have to confess that I still have not arrived at my intended goal and can hope to reach it only by a detour,

what can I say! How shall I excuse myself? At all events, I could offer the following observation: if it is permissible for the humorist to throw together a hodge-podge of inconsequential details, if he brazenly leaves it to the reader to extract the half-meanings hidden in the confusion, should it not be incumbent upon the intelligent and reasonable person to strive in a seemingly curious fashion after many different points, until one can finally identify them, reflected and gathered into one focal point, and comprehend how the most diverse influences surrounding a person impel him to a decision which he could have made in no other way, neither out of inner impulse nor outward occasion?

Among the variety of things I still have left to say, I have a choice as to what I attempt first. But this does not matter, either; you will simply have to be patient, read, and read on, and in the end what would have struck you as most curious, had it been expressed in a word, will suddenly leap out at you and seem perfectly natural, so much so that afterward you will wonder why you had to give a moment's notice to these introductory remarks in the form of explanations.

But now to get somewhat back on course, I shall turn to that oarlock again, and recall a conversation that I by chance had with our true friend Jarno, whom I found in the mountains under the name of Montan, a conversation that had awakened especially strong feelings in me. The circumstances of our lives follow a mysterious course, which cannot be calculated. You surely remember the set of instruments your capable surgeon produced, when I lay wounded in the woods and you came to my aid? At the time, it glistened so before my eyes and made such a deep impression that I was utterly enchanted when, years later, I encountered it again in the hands of a younger man. The latter placed no particular value on it; all the instruments had been improved in recent times and made more functional. I acquired it all the more easily because that helped him to procure a new one. From then on, I carried it with me always, not for use, to be sure, but rather as a comforting memento: it was witness to the moment in which my happiness began, though I was to reach it only by a great detour.

By chance Jarno saw it the night we stayed at the charcoal burner's; he recognized it at once, and replied to my explanation, "I have nothing against setting up such a fetish, as a reminder of many an unexpected blessing, of the significant consequences of a random circumstance. It uplifts us, as something that points to the incommensurable, strengthens us in perplexity, and encourages our hopes. But it would be better if you had let yourself be prompted by these instruments to learn their use as well, and how to perform what they mutely demand of you."

"Let me admit," I replied, "that this has occurred to me hundreds of times. An inner voice spoke up inside me, allowing me to recognize in this my true vocation." I then told him the story of the drowned boys, and how I had heard at the time that they might have been saved, if they had been bled. I had resolved to learn how, but every hour effaced my resolution.

"Then take it up now," Montan said. "I have seen you occupied so long with matters that bear on and relate to the human mind, spirit, heart, and whatever else it is called. Yet what have you gained by it, for yourself and for others? The ills of the soul, into which we fall through bad luck or our own errors: common sense can do nothing to cure them, reason but little, time much, but decisive action most of all. Let everyone work with and on himself in this regard; that you have learned, both from your own experience and from that of others."

He attacked me with vehement and bitter words, as is his wont, and said many harsh things that I do not care to repeat. He concluded by saying that nothing was more worth learning or achieving than to help the healthy person when he was injured by some chance. With intelligent treatment, Nature would soon be restored. The sick should be left to physicians, but no one needed a surgeon so much as the healthy. In the tranquility of rural life, in the intimate circle of the family he was just as welcome as in the turmoil of battle and its aftermath; at the sweetest of life's moments as at its bitterest and most terrible. And meanwhile misfortune ruled everywhere, grimmer than death itself and just as relentless, indeed even more ruthless, spoiling life and its pleasures.

You know him and can imagine without much difficulty that he spared neither me nor the world. But he relied most on the argument that he brought to bear against me in the name of society as a whole. "It is all tomfoolery," he said, "your liberal education and all efforts in that direction. What counts is that a man understand one particular thing and do it supremely well, better than anyone else in the vicinity. That is self-evident, particularly in our league. You are just at an age when a person makes a thoughtful commitment, evaluates with insight what lies before him, approaches it from the proper angle, and directs his talents and skills to the proper goal."

Why should I continue to state the obvious? He made clear to me that I could receive a dispensation from the peculiar requirement of an unsettled life, though obtaining it would be difficult. "You are the kind of person," he said, "who takes easily to a place, but not easily to a vocation. An unsettled life is prescribed for everyone like that, in hopes that they find their way to a stable way of life. But if you will truly dedicate yourself to the most divine of professions, to heal with-

out miracles and to perform miracles without words, then I will intercede for you." He said all this hastily, and added whatever else in the way of powerful arguments his eloquence could muster.

At this point I am inclined to end. But first you shall hear in detail how I have used the permission to stay longer in particular places, and how I have been able to enter into and train myself in the occupation to which I have always secretly been drawn. Enough! For the great project you are all undertaking, I will appear as a useful, a necessary member of the company, and will follow your paths with a measure of confidence, with a certain pride, for it is a praiseworthy pride to be worthy of you all.

Reflections in the Spirit of the Wanderers: Art, Ethics, Nature

Everything clever has already been thought; one must merely try to think it again.

How can one come to know oneself? Through contemplation never, more likely through action. Try to do your duty, and you shall know at once what you are.

But what is your duty? What the day demands.

The rational world should be regarded as a great, immortal individual, who ineluctably brings about that which must be, and thereby gains mastery even over chance.

The longer I live, the more irked I am to see man, who actually occupies his high position in order to rule over Nature, in order to free himself and his loved ones from the harsh grip of necessity—when I see how, from some false preconception, he does the very opposite of what he wants, and then, because the undertaking as a whole is ruined, dabbles wretchedly in details.

Capable active man, earn and expect for yourself:

from the great—grace,
from the mighty—favor,
from the active and good—furtherance,
from the multitude—popularity,
from the individual—love.

Dilettantes, when they have done their best, are wont to excuse themselves by saying the work is not yet finished. Of course, it can never be finished, because it was never begun properly. The master presents his work as finished after only a few strokes; polished or not, it is nevertheless complete. The cleverest dilettante gropes in uncertainty, and as the work grows, the original insecurity becomes ever more perceptible. At the very end, the initial failure is revealed, when it cannot be corrected, and so of course the work cannot be finished.

For true art there can be no schooling, but certainly preparation. What is best, however, is for the humblest student to participate in the work of the master. Excellent painters have begun as grinders of colors.

Another matter altogether is imitation, to which man's natural inclination toward activity can be drawn fortuitously by a significant artist, who executes difficult things with ease.

We are sufficiently convinced of the necessity of the plastic artist's doing studies from Nature and of their value in general; yet we cannot deny that we are often troubled when we become aware of the misuse of such a laudable endeavor.

To our mind, the young artist should embark on few, if any, studies from Nature without also thinking how he would develop each sketch into a whole, how he might transform this detail into a pleasing picture and enclose it in a frame, to present it to the art lover and connoisseur.

Many a beautiful thing stands isolated in the world, but it is for the mind to discover the connections and thereby create works of art.—The flower acquires its charm only from the insect that clings to it, from the dewdrop that moistens it, from the vase from which it draws its last nourishment. There is no bush, no tree, that cannot be given significance by the proximity of a rock or spring, or that would not gain greater appeal simply by being portrayed at a moderate remove. The same holds for human figures and animals of every sort.

The advantage the young artist derives from this is manifold. He learns to think, to join properly what belongs together, and if he composes cleverly in this fashion, he will not lack for what is called originality, the development of diversity out of a single element.

Should he meet the requirements of true art pedagogy itself in this respect, he has gained along the way the great additional benefit,

which ought not to be sneered at, that he has learned to produce saleable drawings, graceful and pleasing to the collector.

Such a work need not be executed and polished to the highest degree. If it has been well observed, thought out, and completed, it may be more attractive to the collector than a more ambitious, elaborate work.

Let every young artist look through the studies in his sketch books and portfolio and consider how many of those drawings he might have made appealing and desirable in this manner.

This is not a question of aiming for the heights, though we might also speak of that; it is said only to warn against following a false path and to point to the higher way.

Let the artist try this out for only half a year and never reach for charcoal or brush without intending to make a completed picture of the natural object before him. If he has native talent, it will soon be revealed what purpose we had in mind with these suggestions.

Tell me with whom you associate, and I will tell you who you are. Once I know with what you occupy yourself, I know what you can become.

Every man must think in his own way, since he always finds on his path a truth, or a sort of truth, which helps him through life. Only he should not let himself go; he must keep watch over himself; naked instinct ill becomes a human being.

Unrestrained activity, of whatever kind, leads at last to bankruptcy.

In the works of man, as in those of Nature, we must attend first and foremost to intentions.

People go wrong, in regard to themselves and others, because they treat the means as an end, so that for sheer activity nothing happens, or perhaps something detestable.

What we think out, what we undertake, should be of such perfect beauty and purity that the world could only mar it. We would then have the advantage that we could adjust what has been disrupted and restore what has been destroyed.

With whole, half, and quarter mistakes it is exceedingly difficult and troublesome to put them right, to sift them, and to place their elements of truth in the proper context.

It is not always necessary for the truth to be tangible; it is enough if it hovers over us spiritually and produces harmony, if it wafts gravely and kindly through the air like the pealing of bells.

When I inquire of younger German painters, even those who have spent some time in Italy, why they assault our eyes with such ugly, glaring colors, especially in their landscapes, and seem to shun any harmony, they reply boldly and confidently: that is precisely how they see Nature.

Kant has made us aware that there is such a thing as a critique of reason, that this highest faculty possessed by man has cause to keep watch over itself. What great benefits this voice has brought us, I would hope everyone has observed in himself. In the same sense I should like to suggest that a critique of the senses is necessary if art, and especially German art, is ever to recover its vitality and move forward at a gratifying pace.

Though born a rational being, man needs much education, whether gradually imparted by the care of his parents and teachers, by gentle example, or revealed by stern experience. Likewise a *potential* artist is born, but not an *accomplished* one. He may look at the world with fresh eyes, he may have a good eye for form, proportion, movement; but for the higher aspects of composition, for placement, light, shadow, color, he may lack natural talent, without knowing it.

Unless he is inclined to learn from more highly trained artists of past and present days what he lacks in order to be a true artist, a false notion of preserving originality will lead him to look over his own shoulder. For not only what we are born with, but also whatever we can acquire belongs to us, and we are those things.

General notions and great arrogance are always poised to bring about dreadful misfortune.

"To play the flute, it is not enough to blow; you must also move your fingers."

Botanists have a category of plants they call *Incompletae*. One may also say that there are incomplete, unfinished human beings. They are those whose actions and achievements are not in proportion to their longing and striving.

The humblest person can be complete if he operates within the limits of his capacities and skills; but even great strengths are obscured, nullified, and destroyed if that indispensable moderation is lacking. We will see more of this evil in modern times, for who will

be able to meet the challenges of this much more demanding age, and its rapid pace?

Only intelligent and active people, who know their own powers and utilize them with moderation and good sense, will go far in the world.

A great error: thinking oneself more than one is, and valuing oneself less than one is worth.

Now and then I encounter a youth who seems to need no alteration or improvement. But it alarms me when I see so many entirely ready to swim with the stream of the age, and this is the point I always wish to call to mind: that man is given the rudder of his fragile bark in order that he follow not the caprice of the waves but his own will, informed by insight.

But how is a young man to learn on his own to consider reprehensible and harmful things that everyone does, approves and encourages? Why should he not let himself and his instincts go along as well?

To my mind, the greatest evil of our time, which allows nothing to come to fruition, is that each moment consumes its predecessor, each day is squandered in the next, and so we live perpetually from hand to mouth, without ever producing anything. Do we not already have newspapers for each part of the day! Some clever soul could probably insert one or two more. The result is that everyone's deeds, actions, scribbles, indeed, all his intentions, are dragged before the public. No one is permitted to rejoice or sorrow except to entertain all the rest; and so everything leaps from house to house, from town to town, from empire to empire, and finally from continent to continent, always express.

As little as the steam engines can be throttled can anything similar be done in the moral realm. The liveliness of commerce, the continual rustle of paper money, the increase in debts to pay off other debts—all these are frightful elements that the young man of the present confronts. He is fortunate if he is endowed with a moderate, peaceable disposition that neither makes excessive demands on the world nor allows itself to be determined by it.

But the spirit of the day threatens him in every sphere, and nothing is more important than to make him aware early enough of the direction toward which his will must steer.

The significance of purity in word and deed grows with the years, and if I have someone around me for a longer period, I always try

to alert him to the differences between straightforwardness, trust, and indiscretion, that in fact there are no distinct differences, but only subtle shadings, from the most innocent act to the most destructive, which must be observed, or rather, felt.

Here we must exercise our tact, or else we run the danger that we may unwittingly forfeit the good opinion of people just as we are trying to win it. One does come to learn this in the course of life, but only after paying a high tuition, which one can alas not spare one's descendants.

The relationship of the arts and sciences to life is very different, depending on the level at which they are situated, on the conditions of the time, and on thousands of other chance factors. For this reason no one can easily make sense of it as a whole.

Poetry has its greatest effect at the beginnings of situations, even if they are completely primitive, half cultivated; or at a turning point for a culture, as it becomes aware of a foreign culture, so that one might say in that case also that the effect of newness is making itself felt.

Music, in the best sense of the word, has less need of newness. In fact, the older it is, the more accustomed one is to it, the greater its effect.

The dignity of art appears perhaps most eminently in music, which has no content that must be discounted. It is entirely form and attitude and elevates and ennobles everything it expresses.

Music is either sacred or profane. The sacred is wholly suitable to its dignity, and here music exerts the greatest influence on life, an influence which remains constant through all periods and epochs. Profane music should certainly be cheerful.

Any music that mixes the sacred and the profane is godless, and halfhearted music which prefers to express weak, pitiful, wretched emotions is tasteless. For it is not serious enough to be sacred, and it lacks the chief characteristic of its opposite: cheerfulness.

The holiness of church music, the cheerfulness and playfulness of folk music are the two pivots about which true music revolves. At these two points it always displays an unfailing effect: devotion or dancing. Mixing causes confusion; the weakened form is flat, and if music turns to didactic or descriptive poetry and the like, it becomes cold.

Sculpture is effective only in its highest realization; anything mediocre can be impressive for more than one reason, but mediocre

art works of this sort confuse more than they please. Sculpture must therefore seek some interesting content, and that it finds in the portrayal of important people. But here, too, it must attain a high degree of excellence if it is to be both true and dignified.

Painting is the most permissive and comfortable of all the arts. The most permissive because people give it a good deal of credit and take pleasure in it for the sake of its subject matter, even when it is only craftsmanship or scarcely art, partly because a soulless technical accomplishment arouses admiration in uneducated and educated viewers alike, so that it need merely approach true art in order to be warmly received. True colors, surfaces, relationships among the visible elements are pleasing in themselves, and since in any case the eye is accustomed to seeing everything, a misdrawn figure and thus a defective drawing are not so repugnant to it as a discord to the ear. One accepts the poorest copy, because one is accustomed to seeing even poorer objects. Consequently the painter need be only a middling artist to find a larger audience than a musician of the same stature. At any rate, the lesser artist can always function by himself, whereas the lesser musician must ally himself with others, to produce some effect through joint achievement.

To the question of whether in viewing artistic achievements one should or should not draw comparisons, we would reply as follows: the trained expert should draw comparisons, because he has the ideal hovering before him, has already grasped what can and cannot be achieved. The amateur, on the way toward acquiring such training, serves himself best when he draws no comparisons but considers each achievement separately; he thereby gradually develops his feeling and sense for general principles. The comparisons of novices are actually only a convenience to avoid making a judgment.

Love of truth manifests itself in this, that one can find and value the good everywhere.

A historical sense for mankind means one so well trained that when it evaluates contemporary accomplishments and merits, it also considers the past in its assessment.

The best thing we have from history is the enthusiasm it arouses.

Peculiarity elicits peculiarity.

One must take into account that there are a great many people who also want to say something important, but are not productive, and so the strangest things come out.

Profound and serious thinkers are not in good odor with the public.

If I am to listen to someone else's opinion, it must be expressed positively; I have enough problematic thoughts of my own.

Superstition is integral to man's being, and when we think we have banished it entirely, it takes refuge in the strangest nooks and crannies, from which, when it feels relatively safe, it suddenly emerges.

We would know a good many things better if we did not want to know them too precisely. After all, an object becomes comprehensible to us only at an angle of less than forty-five degrees.

Microscopes and telescopes actually confuse man's clear senses.

I keep still about many things, for I do not want to confuse people, and am quite content if they are happy when I am annoyed.

Everything that liberates the mind without giving us more self-mastery is harmful.

The *what* of a work of art interests people more than its *how*. They can grasp the former through details but cannot comprehend the latter as a whole. Hence the focus on specific passages, by which process, if one looks closely, the effect of the whole is still conveyed, but unbeknownst to all.

The question "where did the author get this?" likewise leads only to the *what*, while the *how* remains a mystery.

The imagination is regulated only by art, especially by poetry. There is nothing more frightful than imagination without taste.

Mannerism is idealism gone wrong, subjectivized idealism. Hence it seldom lacks cleverness.

The philologist must rely on the congruity of the written tradition. The basis of it is a manuscript, but a manuscript may contain actual gaps, copying errors which make for gaps in the sense, and whatever else may be a flaw in a manuscript. Now a second copy turns up, and a third. Comparison among these makes it possible to perceive more and more of what is sensible and rational in the transmitted texts. Indeed the philologist goes further and demands that his inner sense be increasingly able to grasp and portray the congruity of the material without external aids. Since a special tact, a special immersion in his long dead author are necessary for this, and a certain degree of ingenuity is required, we cannot blame the philologist if

he takes it upon himself as well to make judgments of taste, in which, however, he does not always excel.

A poet must rely on representation. The latter is at its best when it vies with reality, i.e., when the descriptions are so lively in spirit that they seem actual to everyone. At its peak, poetry seems completely external; the more it withdraws into internal feelings, the more it is in danger of sinking.—Poetry that represents only internal feelings, without embodying them in external images, or that does not imbue these external images with internal feelings—both are the final stages from which poetry crosses into ordinary life.

Rhetoric relies upon all the advantages of poetry, all its privileges. It appropriates them and misuses them to obtain certain momentary outward advantages in civic life—whether moral or immoral.

Literature is the fragment of fragments; the least part of all that ever happened and was spoken was written down, and of what was written only the least part has survived.

Lord Byron is a talent fully developed in natural truth and grandeur, although wild and disturbing; and therefore there is hardly anyone comparable to him.

The special value of so-called folk songs is that their motifs are drawn directly from Nature. However, the educated poet could also avail himself of this advantage, if he knew how.

But here the former always have the advantage, in that natural people are better at laconic expression than the educated.

Shakespeare is dangerous reading for budding talents; he compels them to reproduce him, and they think they are producing themselves.

No one can pass judgment on history unless he has experienced history himself. This is true of entire nations. The Germans can pass judgment on literature only now that they have a literature themselves.

One is truly alive only when one enjoys the good will of others.

Piety is not an end but a means to rise to the highest level of culture through pure peace of mind.

That is why one can observe that those who set piety as their end and goal usually become hypocrites.

“When a man is old, he must do more than when he was young.”

Duty fulfilled continues to feel like guilt because one has never done quite enough to satisfy oneself.

Only the unloving person perceives faults; therefore, in order to recognize them, one must become unloving, but no more than is necessary for this purpose.

The greatest happiness is the one that corrects our faults and makes good our errors.

If thou canst read, then thou shalt understand; if thou canst write, then thou must know something; if thou canst believe, then thou shalt comprehend; when thou desirest, thou wilt be obligated; when thou demandest, thou wilt not receive, and when thou art experienced, thou shalt be useful.

We acknowledge no one but he who is useful to us. We acknowledge our prince because we see our property secured beneath his aegis. We expect of him protection against disagreeable circumstances from without and within.

The brook is friends with the miller, to whom it is useful, and is glad to tumble over the mill wheels. What good is it to the brook to glide indifferently through the valley?

He who contents himself with pure experience and acts according to it has truth enough. The growing child is wise in this respect.

Theory in and for itself is of no use, except insofar as it makes us believe in the relatedness of phenomena.

All abstractions are brought closer to human understanding through application, and similarly, human understanding attains abstraction through action and observation.

He who demands too much or who rejoices in complexity is exposed to confusion.

There is nothing wrong with thinking by analogy; analogies have the virtue of not concluding and not aiming for ultimate answers. By contrast, induction is dangerous, since it begins with a foregone conclusion in view and in working toward it sweeps both falsehood and truth along in its path.

Ordinary perception, an accurate view of earthly things, is a legacy common to all ordinary human understanding.—*Pure* perception of outer and inner aspects is very rare.

The former manifests itself in practical good sense, in direct action; the latter symbolically, preeminently in mathematics, in num-

bers and formulas, in speech, primordially, in tropes, as the poetry of genius, as the proverbial expression of human understanding.

That which is absent affects us through tradition. Its usual form is what we call historical. A higher form, allied to the imagination, is mythical. Should one look beyond this one for yet a third form, some kind of meaning, it turns into mysticism. It is also apt to become sentimental, so that we appropriate only what we find agreeable.

The agencies to which we must attend if we wish truly to advance are those which:

prepare
accompany
contribute
aid
advance
strengthen
hinder
have lasting effects.

In thought as in action one must distinguish between what is accessible and what is inaccessible. Without this, little can be accomplished in life or in knowledge.

“Le sens commun est le Genie de l’humanité.”

Common sense, which is supposed to be the guiding spirit of mankind, must be viewed first of all through its manifestations. If we examine what mankind uses it for, we discover the following:

Mankind is limited by its needs. If these go unmet, it becomes impatient; if they are met, mankind seems apathetic. The true human being therefore alternates between the two states, and he will use his understanding, his so-called common sense, to satisfy his needs. This done, he has the task of filling up the spaces left by apathy. If this remains confined to the nearest and most essential boundaries, he can succeed. But if his needs mount, if they overstep the limits of the ordinary, then common sense no longer suffices, is no longer a guiding spirit, and the realm of error stands open before mankind.

There is nothing so irrational that good sense or accident cannot set it straight, and nothing so rational that bad sense and accident cannot lead it astray.

Every great idea, as soon as it makes an appearance, exerts a tyrannical effect; hence the advantages it produces are transformed

all too soon into disadvantages. Therefore one can defend and celebrate any institution when one recalls its beginnings and can show that everything that was true of it in the beginning still holds.

Lessing, who resented many kinds of constraints, has one of his characters say: No one must be compelled. A witty man, inclined to gaiety, said: To want is to be compelled. A third, to be sure an educated man, added: To the person of insight, wanting comes naturally. And so the whole circle of understanding, will, and obligation seemed to be taken care of. But on the whole, man's understanding, of whatever sort, determines his actions and omissions; for which reason nothing is more terrifying than watching ignorance in action.

These are two forces for peace: justice and propriety.

Justice emphasizes obligation, government authority seemliness. Justice deliberates and resolves, authority supervises and commands. Justice pertains to the individual, authority to the entirety.

The history of knowledge is a great fugue, in which the voices of the peoples come to the fore in turn.

In the natural sciences there are a number of problems which cannot be discussed properly without enlisting the aid of metaphysics—but not school wisdom and empty words; it is what was, is, and will be before, with, and after physics.

Authority, meaning that in the past something has happened, been said, or been decided, has great worth. But only the pedant would demand authority all the time.

Old foundations are to be honored, but we must not give up our right to lay new foundations again.

Stand fast where you are!—A maxim more necessary than ever, since on the one hand people are being swept into large parties; yet on the other hand each individual wants to make his mark according to his own insight and ability.

It is always better to say directly what one thinks without arguing too much, for all the arguments we present are merely variations on our opinions, and those who are opposed hear neither the one nor the other.

Since I am becoming increasingly acquainted with and immersed in natural science and following its day-to-day progress, many reflections have forced themselves upon me. In regard to the progress and regress that occur simultaneously, I shall make only one here:

that we *cannot eliminate even recognized errors from science*. The reason for this is an open secret.

I call it an error when some event is interpreted falsely, when it is related to something else falsely, when it is derived falsely. Now it can happen, however, in the course of experience and thought, that a phenomenon is seen in its logical relationship, and correctly derived. People are pleased, but ascribe no special importance to it, and calmly leave the error lying right next to it. I know of a whole little warehouse of errors that are being carefully stored.

Now since nothing really interests people except their own opinions, everyone with an opinion to express looks to the right and to the left for expedients to bolster himself and others. The truth is used as long as it serves the turn; but in the heat of rhetoric falsehoods are also seized upon wherever they can be used for the moment, to confuse the issue with half arguments, or to patch together fragments into an apparent whole. When I first discovered this, I was annoyed; then I was depressed, and now it gives me malicious pleasure. I have promised myself never again to unmask such a procedure.

Each thing that exists is an analogue for all that exists; thus being always seems to us separate and interconnected at the same time. If the analogy is pursued too far, everything becomes identical; if it is avoided, everything scatters into an infinitude of particulars. In both cases reflection stagnates, either overwhelmed by life or killed.

Reason is directed at that which is becoming, understanding at that which has become. The former does not ask "to what end?" nor the latter "whence?"—Reason delights in things unfolding; understanding would like to keep everything fixed, so as to make use of it.

It is an innate human peculiarity, and one intimately bound up with man's nature, that he finds what is most immediate insufficient for knowledge. Yet every phenomenon of which we become aware ourselves is what is most immediate at the moment, and we can demand an explanation of it, if we try hard to penetrate it.

But men will not learn this, since it goes counter to their nature. For this reason even educated people, when they have identified something true right on the spot, cannot refrain from connecting it not only with what is most immediate but also with the most distant and faraway things, so that error is piled on error. The immediate phenomenon is connected with the distant one only in the sense

that everything is based upon a few great laws that manifest themselves everywhere.

What is the universal?

The individual case.

What is the particular?

Millions of cases.

There are two errors analogy must avoid: the first, lapsing into witticisms, where it evaporates into nothingness; the other, veiling itself in tropes and images, which, however, is less harmful.

Neither mythology nor legends are to be tolerated in science. Leave these to the poets, whose calling it is to employ them for the benefit and pleasure of the world. Let the man of science confine himself to the most immediate, clearest actuality. Should he, however, occasionally want to step forth as a rhetorician, let that not be forbidden to him.

To save myself, I regard all appearances as independent of one another and try to isolate them strictly. Then I regard them as correlates, and they join together and acquire a life of their own. I apply this primarily to Nature. But this form of observation is also fruitful with respect to the most recent violent developments in world history that encompass us.

Everything we call invention or discovery in the higher sense is the significant exercise or enactment of a basic feeling for truth, which, having long since developed unobtrusively within us, unexpectedly leads to a fruitful insight with lightning swiftness. It is a revelation from within in response to something from without that gives man a presentiment of his godlike nature. It is a synthesis of world and spirit, offering blissful assurance of the eternal harmony of existence.

Man must cling to the belief that the incomprehensible is comprehensible; otherwise he would not undertake research.

Every particular is comprehensible if it can be applied in some way. In this manner the incomprehensible can become useful.

There is a tender empirics that enters into so intimate an identification with its object that it actually becomes a theory. But this heightening of intellectual capacity is characteristic of a highly developed age.

The most obnoxious are the niggling observers and capricious theorists; their experiments are petty and complicated, their hypotheses abstruse and peculiar.

There are pedants who are also rogues, and these are the worst of all.

One need not travel around the world to know that the sky is blue everywhere.

The universal and the particular come together; the particular is the universal appearing under various conditions.

One need not have seen and experienced everything for oneself; but if you choose to trust someone else and his representations, bear in mind that now you are dealing with three elements: with the object and two subjectivities.

The fundamental property of the living entity: to divide, to unite, to dissolve in the universal, to persist in its particularity, to metamorphose, to assert its specificity, and, since anything alive can manifest itself under thousands of conditions, to emerge and disappear, to solidify and to melt, to freeze and to flow, to expand and contract. Since all these processes are taking place in the same moment, anything and everything can occur at the same time. Origination and extinction, creation and destruction, birth and death, joy and sorrow—everything interacts, in equal sense and equal measure, for which reason even the most particular event always appears as the image and likeness of the universal.

If all existence is an eternal parting and uniting, then it follows that human beings, in view of this overwhelming situation, will also be forever parting and coming together.

A clear distinction must be drawn between physics and mathematics. The former must exist in complete independence and endeavor to penetrate Nature and the sacred secret of life with all its loving, reverent, pious powers, quite untroubled by what mathematics achieves and does for its part. Conversely, mathematics must declare its independence of everything external to itself, must follow its own great intellectual course and develop itself more purely than is possible if, as formerly, it concerns itself with what is at hand and attempts either to gain from it or adapt to it.

Natural science requires a categorical imperative as much as moral science; however, one must remember that that is not the end but only the beginning.

The highest wisdom would be to comprehend that everything factual is already theory. The blue of the sky reveals to us the primary law of chromatics. Do not look for anything behind the phenomena; they themselves are the lesson.

In the sciences there are many certainties, as soon as one does not allow oneself to be led astray by the exceptions and learns to show proper respect for the problems.

When I finally come to rest at the primal phenomenon, that, too, is merely resignation. Still, there is a vast difference between resigning myself to the limits of human existence itself and accepting the hypothetical limitations of my narrow individuality.

When one examines the problems treated by Aristotle, one is astounded by his powers of observation and by all the Greeks had eyes for. But they commit the mistake of being overhasty, proceeding directly from the phenomenon to its explanation, as a result of which wholly inadequate theoretical assertions appear. This, however, is a universal mistake, still committed today.

Hypotheses are lullabies with which the teacher rocks his students to sleep. The thoughtful, faithful observer learns more and more to recognize his limitations. He sees that the farther knowledge extends, the more problems appear.

Our mistake consists in doubting certainties and wanting to pin down uncertainties. My maxim in scientific research is: to hold onto the certainties and to be alert to the uncertainties.

Venial hypotheses are the ones proposed almost as a joke to be disproved by sober Nature.

How could anyone hope to appear as a master in his field if he taught nothing useless?

The height of folly is that everyone thinks he must pass on what is believed to be known.

Because didactic presentations must offer certainty, since the student does not want to have anything uncertain passed on to him, the teacher must not leave any problem unsolved, or even skirt it at some distance. Things must be immediately pinned down ("bepaalt," as they say in Dutch), and so for a while one believes one possesses the unknown territory, until someone else pulls the stakes out again, and promptly stakes out another, larger or smaller, area.

Lively inquiry into the cause, mistaking cause for effect, and resting content with a false theory do great harm, not to be dwelt on here.

If many people did not feel obliged to repeat what is untrue simply because they had said it before, they would have developed into very different people.

The false has the advantage that people can always gabble about it; the truth must be put to use at once, or else it is not there.

Anyone who does not comprehend how truth simplifies practical life, may fuss and fret all he likes in order to gloss over his misguided, laborious blunderings a little.

The Germans, and not they alone, possess the talent of making the sciences inaccessible.

The Englishman is a master at putting a new discovery to immediate use, until it leads again to new discoveries and fresh applications. Is it any wonder that they are ahead of us in everything?

The thinking man has the strange characteristic that he likes to conjure up an imaginary picture on the spot where an unresolved problem lies, a picture that continues to haunt him even when the problem has been solved and the truth revealed.

A particular cast of mind is required to conceive of a formless reality in its unique nature and to distinguish it from chimeras, which have a way of obtruding themselves upon us with a certain vivid reality.

In observing Nature on both a large scale and a small, I have unceasingly posed the question: is it the object or is it you yourself finding expression here? And in this spirit I observe both my predecessors and my colleagues.

Every man sees the finished and regulated, formed, complete world only as an element from which he is trying to create a particular world suitable to him. Capable people set to without hesitation and try to manage as best they can. Others waver on the brink; some even doubt of its existence.

Anyone thoroughly imbued with this basic truth would quarrel with no one, but would simply regard the other's way of thinking, as well as his own, as a phenomenon. For we witness almost daily that one person can comfortably entertain thoughts that are impossible for someone else to think, and indeed not only in things that have any influence at all on our weal and woe, but in things that are of no consequence.

One actually knows what one knows only for oneself. If I speak with someone about what I believe I know, he at once believes that he knows better, and I must always withdraw into myself with my knowledge.

Truth is constructive. From error nothing comes; it only entangles us.

Man finds himself surrounded by effects and cannot but inquire into the causes. For the sake of convenience he seizes upon the nearest as the best, and contents himself with that. This is especially true of the common run of human understanding.

If anyone sees an evil, he immediately addresses it directly, i.e., he immediately tries to treat the symptoms.

Reason has mastery only over what is alive; the already existent world, with which geognosy deals, is dead. Hence there can be no geology, for reason has no role here.

When I find the fragments of a skeleton, I can gather them and put them together. For here eternal reason speaks to me through an analogue, even if the skeleton be a giant sloth.

What no longer comes into existence we cannot imagine as coming into existence; we do not comprehend that which has already come into existence.

The widespread new vulcanism is actually a bold attempt to link the incomprehensible world of the present to an unknown bygone world.

Identical, or at least similar, effects are produced in various ways by natural forces.

Nothing is more odious than the majority, for it consists of a few strong leaders, of scoundrels who accommodate themselves, of weaklings who assimilate, and of the masses, who trundle along behind without knowing in the least what they want.

Mathematics, like dialectics, is an instrument of the inner higher sense, while in practice it is an art like rhetoric. For both of these, nothing has value but form; content is immaterial. Whether mathematics is adding up pennies or guineas, whether rhetoric is defending truth or falsehood, makes no difference to either.

Here, however, it is a matter of the nature of the person who follows such a trade, practices such an art. An effective lawyer in a just cause, a brilliant mathematician before the starry firmament, both appear equally godlike.

What is exact in mathematics but exactitude? And this latter, is it not the result of an inner sense of truth?

Mathematics has no power to dispel prejudice; it cannot temper self-will, nor calm factional spirit. It can do nothing at all in the moral sphere.

The mathematician is complete only insofar as he is a complete human being, as he is sensible in himself of the beauty inherent in truth. Only then will his work be thorough, transparent, perceptive, pure, clear, graceful, even elegant. All that is needed if one would be like La Grange.

Aptness, effectiveness, and grace reside not in language itself but in the spirit embodied in it. Thus, it is not left to the individual to confer these desirable qualities on his calculations, speeches, or poems. It is a question of whether Nature has endowed him with the requisite spiritual and moral qualities. Spiritual: the gifts of sight and insight; moral: that he may fend off the evil demons that could prevent him from paying due honor to the truth.

The desire to explain the simple by the complex, the easy by the difficult, is a mischief that pervades the entire body of knowledge. It is probably acknowledged by those with insight, but not always admitted to.

Subject physics to thorough study, and it will be found that the phenomena and experiments on which it is based vary in value.

Everything depends on the primary, the original experiments, and the chapter built upon them stands firm and secure. But there are also secondary and tertiary ones, etc. If they are given the same credence, they only confuse what had been clarified by the first ones.

A great evil in science, indeed in all realms, is that people who possess no capacity for ideas venture into theory, because they do not comprehend that even a great deal of knowledge does not justify such a step. They set to work with a laudable degree of human understanding, but this latter has its limits and risks becoming absurd when they are exceeded. The allotted sphere and legacy of the human understanding is the realm of action and practical affairs. So long as it is active, it will seldom go wrong. The higher reaches of thought, however, drawing conclusions and forming judgments, are not its territory.

Experience is at first useful to science, then becomes harmful, because experience makes laws and exceptions visible. The average of the two by no means yields truth.

It is said that between two opposing opinions the truth lies in the middle. By no means! The problem lies between them, the unseeable, eternally active life, contemplated in tranquility.

Book Three

Chapter One

After all of this and what might ensue from it, Wilhelm's first concern was to seek renewed contact with the members of the league and to meet somewhere with some section of it. Accordingly he consulted his little chart and set out on the road that seemed most likely to bring him to his goal. But since he had to cut across country in order to reach the most favorable point, he found it necessary to make the journey on foot and to have his baggage carried along behind him. At every step, however, he was richly rewarded for his trouble, in that he unexpectedly encountered the loveliest regions, of the sort formed where foothills merge into the plain: shrub-covered hills, their gentler slopes thriftily cultivated, every surface green, nothing rugged, barren, and untilled to be seen anywhere. He now reached the principal valley, where all the tributaries flowed together. This too was carefully planted and formed a pleasant prospect. Slender trees marked the windings of the river and the brooks flowing into it, and when he took out the map which was his guide, he saw to his amazement that the plotted line cut right through this valley, and that he was therefore on the right road, at least for the moment.

An old, well maintained castle, renovated at different periods, appeared on a wooded hilltop. At its foot sprawled a cheerful hamlet, the inn conspicuously prominent. He made his way toward it, and was received cordially enough by the host, but with apologies that he could not be lodged there without the permission of a group who had reserved the entire inn for some time, for which reason he had to direct all other guests to the older hostel farther up the hill. After a brief conversation, the man seemed to reconsider and said, "At the moment no one is in, but it is Saturday, and it cannot be long before the prefect turns up to settle the weekly score and make arrangements for the coming week. Truly, an admirable order prevails among these men, and it is a pleasure to deal with them, even though they are particular;

if one makes no great profit from them, at least it is a sure one." With this he bade the new guest wait in the large antechamber upstairs and see what might happen next.

Upon entering, he found a spacious, clean room, completely bare but for benches and tables. He was the more astonished to see a large plaque fastened above one of the doors, on which could be read these words in golden letters: "Ubi homines sunt modi sunt," which we may explain in our own language as meaning that wherever men come together in society, the manner in which they may function and remain together at once develops. This saying started our traveler thinking. He took it as a good omen, since it confirmed what he himself had often found to be sensible and productive. It was not long before the prefect appeared, who, prepared by the innkeeper, after a brief conversation with no special interrogation, accepted him under the following conditions: that he stay three days, that he participate freely in all that went on, and, whatever might occur, not ask for the reason, nor on departing ask for the score. Our traveler had to agree to all of this, for the deputy could not yield on any of the points.

The prefect was just about to leave when the sound of singing floated up the staircase. Two handsome young men approached, singing, to whom the prefect intimated with a simple gesture that the guest had been accepted. Without interrupting their song, they greeted him cordially and continued their charming duet. It was easy to tell that they had practiced thoroughly and were masters of their art. As Wilhelm showed lively interest, they ended and asked whether he did not sometimes think of a song as he walked along and sing it to himself. "Nature has, to be sure, denied me a good voice," Wilhelm replied, "but often a secret spirit seems to whisper something rhythmical into my ear, so that I move in time as I stride along and imagine I hear soft sounds accompanying a song that comes to me in one way or other."

"If you can recall one of them, write it down for us," they said; "let us see whether we can accompany your singing spirit." At this he took a sheet of paper from his writing tablet and then handed them the following:

From the mountains to the hillsides,
Through the valley wide and long,
There's a sound as if of wingbeats,
There's a movement as of song;
On this urging from above
Follows pleasure, follows aid;
And thy striving be in love,
And of deeds thy life be made.

After brief consideration the two struck up a cheerful duet in hiking tempo, which swept the listener along with progressive repetition and

interweaving. Wilhelm could not say whether this was his own melody, his own earlier theme, or whether the melody had only now been fitted to it so that no other rhythm was conceivable. The singers had continued contentedly in this way for some time when two sturdy young fellows arrived who, by all their attributes, were at once recognizable as masons, while the two who followed seemed to be carpenters. These four quietly set down their tools and listened to the song; soon they joined in, surely and resolutely, so that it seemed as if a whole band of hikers were tramping over hill and dale, and Wilhelm thought he had never heard anything so pleasant and so uplifting to the spirit. This pleasure, however, was to be increased and raised to its utmost when a gigantic figure came climbing up the stairs, trying in vain to moderate his strong, firm tread. He at once set his heavily laden pack-frame in a corner and himself upon a bench, which began to creak, at which the others laughed, without, however, missing a note. But Wilhelm was very surprised when this son of Enoch likewise joined the chorus in a thundering bass. The room shook, and it was significant that he immediately changed the refrain in his own way, singing

In thy life postpone no duty,
And thy life be deed on deed.

It also soon became evident that he was slowing down the tempo and obliging the others to follow him. When at last they had concluded and had enough of the song, they accused him of trying to throw them off. "Not at all!" he exclaimed, "it was you who wanted to throw me off; you wanted to make me change my pace, which must be measured and deliberate if I am to march with my burden up hill and down dale and still arrive at the appointed time to satisfy you all."

One by one they now reported to the prefect in another room, and Wilhelm could tell that they were settling accounts, about which he was not allowed to inquire. In the meantime a pair of lively, handsome boys came in and quickly laid the table, setting out moderate servings of food and wine. The prefect now came out and invited all of them to sit down with him. The boys waited on the others, but did not neglect themselves, taking their share standing up. Wilhelm recalled similar scenes from the days when he still lived among the actors, but the present company struck him as graver, their merriment not for show but directed toward significant purposes in life.

The conversation of the craftsmen with the prefect gave the guest clear insight into the situation. The four sturdy young men were employed in the neighborhood, where a lovely country town had been reduced to ashes in a terrible fire. He also gathered that the worthy prefect was busy obtaining lumber and other building materials, which puzzled the guest the more because all of the men proclaimed them-

selves in every other respect not as natives but as itinerants. At the end of the meal, St. Christopher, for so the others called the giant, fetched a glass of good wine that had been set aside as a sleeping draught, and a cheerful song kept the company together as far as Wilhelm's ear was concerned, when it had already dispersed before his eyes. Wilhelm was then shown to a most pleasantly situated room. The full moon was already up, illuminating a lush meadow, and awakened in our traveler's breast memories of similar moments. The spirits of all his dear friends passed before him, but Lenardo's image was so particularly vivid that he imagined he saw him right there in front of him. All this had soothingly prepared him for slumber when the strangest of sounds almost gave him a fright. It issued from the distance, and yet seemed to be within the house itself, for the house shook several times, and the beams reverberated when the sound reached its loudest. Wilhelm, who normally had a keen ear for distinguishing sounds, could not make out what this was. He compared it to the rumbling of a great organ pipe, which for sheer volume cannot produce a definite note. Whether this night terror abated toward morning, or whether Wilhelm gradually became accustomed to the sound and was no longer sensitive to it, is difficult to determine; in any case, he fell asleep and was pleasantly awakened by the rising sun.

Hardly had one of the serving boys brought him his breakfast when a figure entered whom Wilhelm had noticed at the supper table but had not been able to place clearly. Though well built and broad-shouldered, he moved nimbly, and by the implements he now set out revealed himself to be a barber, ready to render Wilhelm a most welcome service. Otherwise he said nothing, and the operation was carried out deftly without his making a sound. Hence Wilhelm began, and said, "You are a master of your trade; I do not know that I have ever felt a more gentle razor on my cheek. At the same time, you seem to adhere strictly to the laws of your society."

Smiling roguishly, his finger to his lips, the silent barber slipped out the door: "Truly," Wilhelm called after him, "You must be old Red Mantle, or if not he himself, at least a descendant. It is fortunate that you do not expect me to reciprocate, or you would have found yourself ill served."

Hardly had this singular man gone away when the prefect entered to deliver an invitation for that noon, which likewise sounded rather strange. The *bond*, so he said specifically, bade the stranger welcome, summoned him to the midday meal, and took pleasure in the expectation of closer acquaintance. Inquiry was also made as to the guest's well-being and whether he was satisfied with the accommodations. The latter had nothing but praise for all that he had encountered. To be sure, he would have liked to inquire of this man, as previously of the

silent barber, about the dreadful noise in the night, which had, if not frightened him, certainly disturbed him. Recalling his pledge, however, he refrained from questions, in the hope that without pressing the issue he might learn what he wished to know through the good will of the company or by chance.

Not until our friend was alone did he wonder about the mysterious person from whom the invitation had come, and he could not tell what to make of it. To announce one superior or several by a neutral term seemed questionable indeed. Moreover, everything was so quiet round about that he thought he had never experienced a more quiet Sunday. He left the house, heard the pealing of bells, and went toward the village. Mass had just ended, and among the villagers and country folk thronging out of the church he spied three of yesterday's acquaintances: a journeyman carpenter, a mason, and one of the boys. Later he noticed the other three among the Protestant worshippers. How the rest attended to their devotions was not evident, but there seemed good reason for him to conclude that in this society a decided freedom of religion prevailed.

Toward noon the prefect met him at the castle gate. He led Wilhelm through a series of halls into a large antechamber, where he bade him sit down. Many people passed by and entered an adjacent hall. Among them were those he had already met; even St. Christopher strode past. They all saluted the prefect and the newcomer. What struck Wilhelm most was that he seemed to see only artisans, all dressed in the usual fashion, but their clothes were spotlessly clean; there were a few he might have taken to be connected with the chancellery.

When there were no more guests crowding in, the prefect led our friend through the stately doorway into a spacious hall. Here an immense table was set, and he was conducted past the lower end toward the head, where he saw three persons standing at the head. But he was seized with amazement as he came near and, almost before Wilhelm had recognized him, Lenardo threw his arms around his neck. He had scarcely recovered from this surprise when a second man ardently embraced him and turned out to be the eccentric Friedrich, Natalie's brother. The delight of the friends spread to all present; a cry of joy and blessing rose up from the entire table. But suddenly, when they were seated, all fell silent, and the banquet was served and partaken of with a certain solemnity.

Toward the close of the meal, at a sign from Lenardo, two singers rose, and Wilhelm was astonished to hear his song of the previous day repeated. Because of what is to follow, we find it necessary to insert it again here:

From the mountains to the hillsides,

Through the valley wide and long,
There's a sound as if of wingbeats,
There's a movement as of song;
On this urging from above
Follows pleasure, follows aid;
Let thy striving be in love,
And of deeds thy life be made.

Hardly had this duet, pleasantly accompanied by a small chorus, approached its end, when two singers on the other side of the table leaped to their feet and with earnest vehemence took up the song, giving it an entirely different turn. To Wilhelm's astonishment, they now sang:

For the bonds are ripped asunder,
Trust no longer carries weight.
Can I say, or even wonder,
Why, exposed to cruel fate,
I must part now, I must wander
Like the widow full of woe,
Not as once, but with another,
Now forever on must go.

The chorus, taking up this strophe, grew ever larger, ever more powerful, yet one could soon distinguish the voice of St. Christopher, who sat at the far end of the table. Toward the end the lament swelled almost unendurably; a defiant courage, combined with the singers' skill, evoked a fugue-like quality that seemed dreadful to our friend. All present seemed truly of one mind, and to be mourning their own fate on the eve of departure. The most remarkable recapitulations, the repeated revival of an almost exhausted song finally struck the bond itself as perilous. Lenardo stood up, and the others quickly took their seats, breaking off the hymn. Lenardo began with kindly words:

"I cannot reproach you for dwelling constantly on the fate that awaits us all, so that you may be prepared for it at any time. If old men, weary of life, remind their fellows, 'Give thought to your death,' we lusty younger folk may well encourage and exhort one another with the words, 'Give thought to your journey.' At the same time, we do well to speak with moderation and serenity of those things we either choose to do or feel we must do. You yourselves know best what is fixed among us and what remains flexible. Celebrate this, too, with cheering, heartening notes; to that I now drink with this farewell draught." He emptied his goblet and sat down. The four singers at once stood up and began, in a variation on the previous melody:

Cling not to your homeland's charms,

Take fresh courage, freely roam!
Strong and daring heads and arms
Everywhere can be at home.
Where we gladly greet the sun
Every care is gone at last;
Each a different course may run,
Therefore is the world so vast.

As the chorus was repeated, Lenardo rose, and all the rest followed; a gesture from him formed the entire company into a singing procession; those at the lower end marched from the hall in pairs, with St. Christopher in the lead. Their marching song became ever gayer and freer, but it sounded especially fine when the company, gathered on the terraced castle grounds, gazed out over the broad valley, in whose luxuriant beauty it would have been a pleasure to wander. As the crowd dispersed in various directions, each according to his wishes, Wilhelm was introduced to the third person who had presided. This was the steward, who had placed the count's castle, lying as it did among several other noble estates, at the disposal of this society for as long as it wished to tarry here, and had contrived to provide it with many advantages. Clever man that he was, he also knew how to make use of the presence of such unusual guests. For while he opened his orchards to them at low cost and supplied them with whatever else they required in the way of food and necessities, he took the opportunity to have long neglected roof shingles replaced, rafters repaired, walls given new footings, floorboards leveled, and other defects put to rights, so that this long neglected, dilapidated property of fading families displayed the happy appearance of active use and comfort, and testified that life begets life, and he who helps others thus constrains them to help him in return.

Chapter Two

Hersilie to Wilhelm

My situation reminds me of a tragedy by Alfieri: since confidantes are wholly lacking, everything must be dealt with in monologues. And indeed, a correspondence with you is exactly like a monologue. Your replies merely take up my syllables, like an echo, only to let them die away. Have you even once given a reply to which a reply could be given in turn? Your letters simply parry mine, keeping them at a distance. When I rise to come toward you, you point me back to my seat.

The above was written a few days ago; now a new urgency has arisen, and an opportunity to deliver this to Lenardo. This letter will find you there, or someone will know where to find you. But wherever it reaches you, I have this to say: if after reading this note, you do not immediately leap from your seat and, like a good traveler, promptly make your way to me, then I declare you the most masculine of men, that is to say, one totally devoid of the most charming of all qualities of our sex; by that I mean curiosity, which at the moment torments me sorely.

To be brief: the key to your splendid little casket has been found. No one must know this but you and I. Now you shall hear how it fell into my hands.

A few days ago our magistrate received an inquiry from a distant office, asking whether a boy had not been loitering around our neighborhood at such and such a time—playing all sorts of pranks, and finally, in the course of a foolhardy act, losing his jacket.

From the description of this rascal, there could be no doubt that it was Fitz, about whom Felix used to tell us so much, and whom he often wished to have back as a playmate.

The officials were now asking for the piece of clothing in question, if it were still available, because the boy, who had come under investigation, cited it as evidence. Our magistrate mentioned this suspected connection to us by chance, and showed us the jacket before he sent it off.

Some spirit good or evil induces me to reach into the breast pocket; a tiny, sharp object is in my grasp; I, usually so apprehensive, squeamish, and timid, clasp it; clasp it and say nothing, and the garment is dispatched. At once I am seized by the strangest of sensations. At the first, furtive glimpse I see, I guess, that it is the key to your casket. Then I was attacked by odd pricks of conscience, all sorts of moral scruples. To reveal what I had found, to surrender it, was impossible. Why should the courts have it when it could be so useful to my friend! Then rectitude and duty tried to raise their voices again, but they could not win me over.

So now you see to what a pass friendship has brought me; what a splendid new faculty is suddenly born in me, for your sake; what an odd thing to have happen! May it be no more than friendship that holds my conscience in check! I am strangely disquieted, between guilt and curiosity. I invent notions and phantasies by the hundreds of what might follow from it; justice and the courts are not to be trifled with. Hersilie, uninhibited, occasionally cheeky creature that she is, involved in a criminal case, for that is where it will end, and what can I do but think of the friend for whose sake I suffer all this! Even without this, I used to think of you, but with pauses; but now I think of you con-

stantly. Now when my heart pounds and I think of the Seventh Commandment, I must turn to you as to the saint who gave rise to the crime and can probably also absolve me; nothing can calm me but opening the casket. My curiosity is now twice as powerful. Come as fast as you can, and bring the casket with you. Together let us decide before what judge the secret belongs. Until then, it remains between us; let no one know of it, whoever he may be.



But now, my friend, what do you say to this depiction of the riddle? Does it not remind you of a barbed arrow? Lord have mercy on us! But the casket must first stand unopened between you and me, and then, once opened, decree what should follow. I hope there will be nothing inside it, and what else I might hope and what else I could tell you—but let that be withheld, that you may set out all the more speedily.

And now, in girlish fashion, another postscript! What right have you and I to the casket? It belongs to Felix; he found it, he claimed it for his own. He is the one we must fetch; we should not open it without his presence.

And so here is a whole new set of problems; for two steps forward there are three steps back.

Why are you roaming about in the world? Come! Bring the dear boy with you, whom I, too, would like to see again.

And so we are back where we started, the father and the son! Do what you can, but come, both of you.

Chapter Three

This singular letter had been written long since and carried hither and yon before it could finally be delivered as addressed. Wilhelm resolved to answer it kindly but in the negative, by the first courier to be dispatched. Hersilie seemed not to take distance into account, and he was at the moment too engaged with serious matters to be tempted by the slightest curiosity as to what might be in the casket.

In addition, several accidents that befell the most impetuous members of the hardworking company gave him the opportunity to demonstrate his mastery in his chosen art. And as one word leads to another, so, even more happily, one action gives rise to another, and if, finally, all this leads back to words again, they are all the more fruitful and uplifting to the spirit. The conversations were as edifying as they were entertaining, for the friends reported to one another what they had hitherto been learning and doing, from which a degree of education had resulted that produced mutual astonishment, so much so that they had to come to know one another all over again.

So one evening Wilhelm began to tell his story. "In order to pursue my studies in surgery, I first sought out a large hospital in the largest city, for there alone is it possible, and I at once turned eagerly to anatomy as the basic field of study.

"In a curious way that no one would guess I was already far advanced in my knowledge of the human form because of my theatrical career; since, all things considered, physical man plays the main role in that world—a handsome man, a handsome woman! If the director is lucky enough to get them, his authors of comedies and tragedies have nothing to fear. The freer conditions under which such a company lives make its members more familiar with the true beauty of unveiled limbs than would any other environment. Various costumes even require that which is usually veiled to be exposed. I could say a great deal about this, as well as about physical defects which the intelligent actor must recognize in himself and others, in order at least to hide them, if not correct them. And so I was sufficiently prepared to pay steady attention to the anatomical lectures that taught the external features in detail; the inner features were likewise not unfamiliar to me, since I had always had a certain intuition about them. An annoying hindrance to these studies was the constant complaint at the lack of specimens, the shortage of cadavers to come under the scalpel for such high purposes. To provide as many as possible, though not enough, harsh laws had been enacted, so that not only criminals, who had forfeited their individuality in every sense, but also other poor wretches, victims of physical or mental ills, were claimed for this use.

"As the need grew, so did the stringency, and with it the opposition of the people, who, on moral and religious grounds, cannot surrender their own person and that of their loved ones.

"Nevertheless the evil continued to spread, becoming so distressing that people had to fear even for the peaceful graves of their dear departed. Not age, not dignity, neither high nor low was safe in its resting place. The mound adorned with flowers, the inscriptions intended to preserve memory were no protection against profitable robbery. The most sorrowful farewell seemed cruelly disrupted, and even as the

mourner walked away from the grave, he had to dread the possibility that the body of the beloved person, adorned and laid to rest, might be dismembered, dragged off, and dishonored.

"All this was repeatedly discussed and threshed out, without anyone's suggesting a remedy or being able to think of one, and the complaints grew more and more widespread, as young men who had attentively followed the lectures felt the need to verify with hand and eye what had been previously seen and heard, and to imprint this essential knowledge more deeply and vividly upon their minds.

"In moments such as these there arises a sort of unnatural scientific hunger which demands to be satisfied by fair means or foul.

"For some time now, this obstacle and impediment had preoccupied and engaged those intent on scientific discovery and activity, when finally a certain case threw the city into such commotion that one morning the pro and contra were discussed with great intensity for several hours. A very beautiful girl, distraught from an unhappy love affair, had sought death in the river and found it. The department of anatomy took possession of her. In vain were all the efforts of her parents, relatives, and even her lover, whom false charges had caused to appear suspect. The higher authorities, who had just increased the severity of the law, could permit no exceptions. In any case there was great haste to use the booty as soon as possible and to distribute it for use."

Wilhelm, who was next in line, was likewise summoned, and found at his assigned place a dubious task, neatly covered on a clean tray. When he removed the cloth, there lay before his eyes the loveliest female arm that had ever been wound around the neck of a young man. He held his instrument case in his hand and dared not open it; he stood, and dared not sit down. His reluctance to mutilate this magnificent product of nature any further struggled with the demands which any man striving for knowledge must place on himself, and which everyone else in the room was busy satisfying.

At this moment there approached him an imposing man whom he had noticed as an infrequent but very attentive auditor and observer; indeed he had already made inquiries about him. No one, however, could give him precise information. It was generally agreed that he was a sculptor, but he was also held to be an alchemist, who lived in a large old house, where the first floor alone was accessible to visitors or those in his employ, while all the other rooms were locked. This man had occasionally approached Wilhelm, had left the class along with him, at the same time seeming to avoid any further connection or communication with him.

This time, however, he spoke with a certain frankness: "I see you hesitate; you marvel at the lovely form and cannot destroy it; forget

the commands of your calling and follow me." With this he covered the arm again, made a sign to the attendant, and the two of them left the place. In silence they walked side by side until the semi-acquaintances stopped before a large portal, the small door in which he opened, urging our friend to enter. Wilhelm found himself in a courtyard, large and roomy, such as one sees in old mercantile establishments, where crates and bales are unloaded on arrival. Here stood plaster casts of statues and busts, as well as packing crates both full and empty. "All this looks rather commercial," the man said; "the possibility of shipping things by water from here is invaluable for me." All of this accorded well with the business of sculptor. Wilhelm found nothing to change this impression when his kindly host led him up a few steps into a spacious room adorned with high and low reliefs, with figures large and small, busts and even individual limbs of great beauty. Our friend surveyed all this with pleasure and listened gladly to the instructive words of his host, although he still could not fail to notice an enormous gulf between these aesthetic works and the scientific endeavors from which they derived. Finally the owner of the house said with some earnestness, "You will easily see why I brought you here. This door," he continued, as he turned to one side, "lies nearer to the entrance of the hall we just left than you might imagine." Wilhelm stepped inside and was indeed amazed when, instead of representations of living forms, as in the previous room, he found the walls covered with anatomical dissections. They must have been made of wax or some similar material, but in any case they had the fresh, colorful appearance of newly prepared specimens.

"Here, my friend," said the artist, "here you see an admirable alternative to those practices in which we engage—to the dismay of the public, at inappropriate times, often with feelings of disgust, and with great care—for destruction or for repulsive preservation. I have to pursue this activity in deepest secrecy, for you must often have heard men of the profession speak of it with contempt. I do not let that deter me, and am preparing something that is bound eventually to have a great effect. Surgeons, particularly when they achieve a plastic concept of form, will certainly be better able to assist eternally generative Nature in healing every injury; the physician himself would be improved in his practice by such a concept. But let us not waste words. You shall shortly discover that more can be learned by building up than by tearing down, more by joining than by separating, more by reviving the dead than by further killing what is already dead. In short, do you want to be my student?" And upon his assent, the expert set before his guest the skeleton of a woman's arm in the same position as the one they had recently seen before them. "I had occasion to notice," the master continued, "what attention you paid to the lectures on

ligaments, and rightly so, since they are what first revive for us the clatter of old bones. Ezekiel must have seen his boneyard first reassemble and join in this fashion before the limbs could move, the arms feel, and the feet stand up again. Here you have material to model with, armatures, and whatever else might be necessary; now try your luck."

The new pupil collected his wits, and as he began to examine the segments of bone more closely, he saw that they were artfully carved out of wood. "I have a skillful man," the teacher explained, "whose art was going begging because the saints and martyrs that he was accustomed to carving were no longer in demand. So I set him to master the human skeleton and make faithful reproductions of it, large and small."

Our friend now did his best and earned the approval of his instructor. He enjoyed testing how strong or weak his memory was, and he discovered with pleasure that the task brought it all back to him. He conceived a passion for the work, and besought the master to take him into his house. Once there, he worked unceasingly; and the large and small bones of the arm were soon neatly assembled. But now the tendons and muscles were to be added, and it seemed a sheer impossibility to construct the entire body, in all its parts, accurately by this method. The master encouraged him, however, and showed him how to copy with casts, for in building up such pieces anew he was spurred to fresh efforts, fresh alertness.

Any task to which a man earnestly devotes himself becomes infinite; only through competitive activity can he help himself. Wilhelm, too, soon overcame the sense of inadequacy, which is always a form of despair, and found himself at ease with the work. "I am pleased," his master said, "that you are taking so well to this approach and proving how fruitful such a method can be, even if it is not acknowledged by the specialists in the field. To be sure, there must be schools, and they will be principally concerned with passing along tradition; whatever has been done before should continue to be done; that is good, and should and will be so. But where the schools fail should also be noted and recognized. We must take hold of the living organism, and practice upon it, but quietly, lest we be obstructed or obstruct others. You have felt vividly, and show through your work, that joining is better than separating, reproducing better than contemplating."

Wilhelm now learned that such models were already widely distributed, although without publicity. But to his greatest astonishment he learned that the current stock was to be packed up and shipped across the sea. This worthy artist had already established relations with Lothario and his friends. For such a school to be founded in the growing colony was considered especially fitting, indeed essential, especially

among naturally moral, high-minded people, to whom actual dissection always has something cannibalistic about it.

"If you admit that most doctors and surgeons retain only a general impression of the dissected human body and believe that they can manage with that, then models like ours are certain to be sufficient to refresh their gradually fading mental images and keep alive what is essential for them. Yes, it requires but interest and inclination, and the most delicate results of the art of dissection can be reproduced. This can be achieved with nothing more than pen, brush, and stylus."

At this he opened a small cupboard and showed Wilhelm the nerves of the face, marvelously rendered. "This is the last work of a young assistant, who, alas, is no longer alive. I had great hopes that he would carry out my ideas and disseminate my wishes to the benefit of many."

There was much talk between the two of the various aspects of this approach, and its relationship to art also formed the subject of some remarkable conversations. In the course of such discussions there emerged a striking and beautiful example of how one should work forward and backward. The master had made a handsome cast in a plastic material of the classical torso of a youth, and was now judiciously attempting to strip the ideal form of its epidermis and transform the beautiful living figure into a demonstration model of muscle structure. "Here, too, means and end lie close together, and I freely admit that I have neglected the end in my concern with the means, though not entirely through my own fault. For only man without veils is truly man; the sculptor stands at the very side of the Elohim, when they fashioned that magnificent figure from formless, repulsive clay. He must harbor similarly god-like thoughts; to the pure all things are pure, so why not God's design in Nature? But we cannot ask that of our century, which cannot manage without fig leaves or animal skins, and even this is still much too little. I had scarcely learned anything when they demanded of me dignified men in dressing gowns with wide sleeves and countless folds. So I turned back, and since I was not allowed to employ what I knew to express beauty, I chose to be useful, and this, too, is of significance. Should my wish be fulfilled, should it be acknowledged as useful that, as in so many other things, copying and copies come to the aid of imagination and memory where the human spirit loses some of its freshness—then many a sculptor will doubtless, as I did, turn around and prefer to work along with you, rather than practice a hateful craft counter to conviction and feeling."

From this they went on to observe that it was good to see how art and technique always balance one another, and, closely related as they are, always incline toward each other, so that art cannot decline without turning into commendable handicraft, handicraft cannot rise without becoming artistic.

The two formed such a bond and grew so used to one another that they parted only with the greatest reluctance when it became necessary for each to embark on his own great purpose.

"Lest it be believed," the master said, "that we want to repudiate Nature and cut ourselves off from her, let us open up a fresh perspective. Across the sea where certain humane views are steadily gaining strength, the abolition of the death penalty has made it necessary to build extensive citadels, walled-in precincts, to protect peaceable citizens against crime, and prevent crime from reigning and raging with impunity. There, my friend, in those forlorn precincts, let us reserve a chapel for Aesculapius; there, as sequestered as the punishment itself, let our knowledge be continually refreshed from objects whose dismemberment will do no violence to our humane feelings, and whose sight will not, as happened to you with that lovely, innocent arm, make the knife falter in our hand and extinguish all desire for knowledge in the face of humane feeling."

"This," said Wilhelm, "was our last conversation. I saw the packed crates float downriver, and wished them a successful journey, and a happy time for us both at their unpacking."

Our friend concluded this account with as much spirit and enthusiasm as he had begun it, his language and voice, especially, livelier than had been usual with him in recent times. When he had come to the end of his story, however, he had the impression that Lenardo seemed distracted and absent-minded, and had not followed what he had said, while Friedrich had smiled and several times almost shaken his head. To our sensitive reader of faces, this lukewarm reception for what he considered extremely important was so noticeable that he could not refrain from taking his friends to task.

Friedrich was ready with a simple and frank explanation: he thought the undertaking laudable and good, to be sure, but not especially significant, and not in the least practicable. He tried to support this opinion with arguments of the sort that are more insulting than one might imagine to someone committed to a thing and intending to carry it out. Consequently, our sculptor-anatomist, after apparently listening patiently for a while, answered with vigor:

"You have excellent qualities, my good Friedrich, that no one could deny, least of all I, but here you speak in the ordinary way of ordinary people. In what is new they see only rarity, but to perceive the significant in something rare requires much more. For people like you everything must first be translated into deeds; it must take place, appear before your eyes as possible, as real—at which point you will accept it like anything else. Every argument you offer I have already heard repeated by experts and laymen, by the former on the basis of prejudice and convenience, by the latter out of indifference. A project like this

one can perhaps be realized only in a new world, where men must take courage to devise new means to satisfy inescapable needs, because the conventional ones are entirely lacking. Then inventiveness awakens and is joined by boldness, and the perseverance of necessity.

"Every doctor, whether he works with medicines or with the scalpel, is nothing without accurate knowledge of the external and internal human organs, and it is by no means sufficient to have acquired in school a fleeting acquaintance with them, to have formed only a superficial conception of the shape, position, and relationships among the diverse parts of the inscrutable organism. Any serious doctor should make a daily practice of reviewing this knowledge and repeating these observations, should seek every opportunity to reestablish the coherence of this living miracle in his mind and eyes. If he knew what was best for him, since he would not have time for such exercises, he would hire an anatomist, who, under his guidance, would work for him in private, and who could be in touch, as it were, with all the complexities of life's involved processes and provide immediate answers to the most difficult questions.

"The more this is understood, the greater the vigor, energy, and passion with which studies in dissection will be pursued. But to that same degree the material for them will decrease; the objects, the cadavers, on which these studies are based, will not be available, will become rarer, more expensive, and a genuine conflict will arise between the living and the dead.

"In the old world everything moves at a sluggish pace, since people want to treat new developments in old ways, treat growing things by rigid rules. The conflict I foresee between the living and the dead will become a matter of life and death; people will be frightened, there will be investigations and laws passed, but in vain. Precautions and prohibitions are no help in such cases; one must start at the very beginning. And that is what my master and I hope to achieve in the new environment; in fact, it is nothing new, it is already there. But what is nowadays art must become handicraft, and what happens in individual cases must become universally possible, and nothing can spread abroad that is not first acknowledged. Our deeds and accomplishments must be acknowledged as the only solution to an obvious crisis that threatens large cities in particular. I will quote the words of my master, but listen well! One day he said to me in strictest confidence:

"The newspaper reader is intrigued and almost amused when he reads stories about resurrection men. At first they stole bodies in great secrecy. To prevent this, watchmen were posted. Now they come with armed bands and seize their booty by force. Nor dare I say out loud that matters will go from bad to worse, for I would be assumed to be if not an accessory, then at any rate privy to the crime by chance, and

as such would be implicated in a very risky investigation, and would in any case have to be punished because I had not informed the authorities of the crime as soon as I learned of it. I will confess to you, my friend: murder has been committed in this city in order to supply the insistent anatomist who pays well for the object he needs. The lifeless body lay before us. I must not describe the scene. He discovered the outrage, and I did, as well; we looked at each other and said nothing; we looked away, said nothing, and went to work.—And it was this, my friend, that drove me to my wax and plaster. It is this that will surely keep you, too, faithful to the art that sooner or later will be appreciated by the world at large.’”

Friedrich jumped up, clapped his hands, and cheered so long that Wilhelm finally became angry in earnest. “Bravo!” exclaimed Friedrich, “now it is the old you again. The first time in ages that you have spoken like someone with something truly at heart. For the first time you have again been carried away by what you were saying, and shown yourself to be one who wants to do something and can speak with enthusiasm.”

Lenardo now took the floor and clarified the previous small misunderstanding. “I may have seemed distracted,” he said, “but only because I was especially attentive. In fact, I was recalling a large collection of this sort that I saw on my travels, and that interested me so much that the curator, who tried to get through quickly by reeling off his regular patter, soon dropped his role, and, since he was himself the artist, showed himself a knowledgeable demonstrator.

“It was remarkable to be in these cool rooms at the height of summer, with sweltering heat outside, seeing before me objects that one would hardly dare approach in the coldest of winters. Here everything conveniently served the search for knowledge. Calmly and in perfect order he showed me the wonders of the human frame and was pleased that he could convince me that such an arrangement was completely adequate for teaching the fundamentals and for refreshing the memory. Of course any student was free in the intermediate phase to turn to Nature and to take the opportunity to inform himself about some specific aspect or other. He asked me to recommend him. For only one large museum abroad had commissioned such a collection, while universities opposed the project altogether, because the masters in the field knew how to train prosecutors, not prosculptors.

“Hence I thought this gifted man the only one in the world, and now we hear there is someone else pursuing the same course. Who knows where a third and fourth may turn up. For our part, we want to do what we can to promote this venture. The impulse must come from without, and in our new circumstances this useful enterprise will certainly prosper.”

Chapter Four

Early the next morning Friedrich entered Wilhelm's room with a notebook in his hand, and offering it to him, said, "With all your virtuous doings, which you narrated in abundant detail, I had no room last night to speak of myself and my own accomplishments, on which I, too, may pride myself and which certify me as a worthy member of this great caravan. Have a look at this notebook and you will see a sample."

Wilhelm quickly skimmed the pages and saw, in easily readable though hastily written form, everything he had related the previous day about his anatomical studies, almost verbatim, at which he could not conceal his astonishment.

"You know," Friedrich explained, "the basic principles of our league; to claim membership you must be thoroughly grounded in some field. I was cudgeling my brains for what I might succeed at and could find nothing, though the answer was obvious—that no one could surpass me in memory, nor in rapid, ready, legible handwriting. You will recall these pleasant qualities from our theatrical days, when we wasted our powder on sparrows, so to speak, without considering that one shot, more sensibly aimed, would bring down a rabbit for the stew pot. How often have I not prompted without text, how often written out the parts from memory in a matter of hours. That was convenient for you and you took it for granted. I did, likewise, and it would not have occurred to me that it could serve me in such good stead. It was the Abbé who first made the discovery and saw that it was grist to his mill. He tried exercising me in it, and I enjoyed what came so easily and pleased a serious man. So now I am like a complete chancellery whenever it is called for, and furthermore we travel with a two-legged adding machine as well, and no prince with a whole corps of officials is better equipped than our leaders."

A cheerful conversation about such activities led their thoughts to other members of the society. "Would you ever think," said Friedrich, "that the most useless creature in the world, or so it seemed, my Philine, should become the most useful link in the great chain? Give her a length of cloth, place men, place women, before her, and without taking measurements she cuts everything out, and even uses all the snippets and scraps to the best advantage, all without a pattern. A gifted, penetrating eye tells her all this; she takes a good look at a person and cuts; he may then go wherever he likes; she keeps cutting and fashions him a coat that fits to a T. But this would not be possible had she not brought in a seamstress, Montan's Lydie, who has finally calmed down and remains calm, but who also sews more evenly than anyone else, stitch after stitch like pearls, like embroidery. That shows

what can become of people. Usually we are weighed down by so much useless baggage, a ragged cloak patched together of habit, self-indulgence, distraction, and caprice. We can thus neither discover nor exercise the best of what Nature has implanted in us, nor even know what she wants of us."

General reflections on the benefits of this sociable connection that had so fortunately developed opened up the finest prospects.

When Lenardo now joined them, he was entreated by Wilhelm to speak of himself as well, to be so good as to give an account of the life he had been leading, and how he had furthered himself and others.

"You probably remember, my dear fellow," Lenardo replied, "in what a peculiar, overwrought condition you found me in the first moments of our acquaintance. I was absorbed, entangled, in the strangest yearning, in an irresistible desire; at the time it was a question only of the next few hours and of heavy suffering in store for me which I myself seemed intent on exacerbating. I could not acquaint you with my earlier youthful circumstances, as I now must do, to show you the road that has brought me here.

"Among the earliest of my abilities, which circumstances developed little by little, was especially a certain bent for the technical, which was daily nourished by the impatience people feel in the country during large building projects, and even more with small alterations, installations, whims, when they must do without one trade after another and would sooner push forward incompetently and sloppily on their own than slow down like a master. Fortunately there was a jack-of-all-trades who used to roam around our locality and, because he made out best with me, preferred helping me more than any of the neighbors. He set up a lathe for me, which he used on visits, more for his own purposes than for my instruction. I acquired carpenter's tools, and my taste for such work was intensified and quickened by the conviction widely expressed at that time that no one could venture into life unless he had some handicraft he might fall back on in an emergency. My enthusiasm received the approval of my tutors, since it accorded with their own principles; I can hardly remember playing, for all my free hours were devoted to building and making things. In truth, I may boast that even as a boy I spurred a smith, by my demands, to learn locksmithing, casting, and clockmaking.

"To achieve all this, it was of course necessary to create the tools, and we suffered not a little from the affliction of technicians who confuse means and end and would rather spend time on preparations and arrangements than on seriously applying themselves to execution. Where we could put our practical talents to work, however, was in designing the park, something no landowner could dispense with any longer. Many a hut covered with moss or bark, rustic bridges and

benches testified to the energy with which we strove to represent primitive building forms in all their crudity in the midst of the civilized world.

"As I grew older, this bent led me to more serious interest in everything that is so useful to the world and indispensable to it in its present state, and lent my years of travel a particular focus.

"But since people tend to stay on the path that has brought them to where they are, I was less favorably disposed toward machinery than toward simple handwork, where strength and feeling operate in unison. Hence I was happiest to linger in isolated villages whose special conditions had made them the home of some special type of work. That sort of thing gives each community a special individuality, gives every family or group of families a distinctive character; people live with a clear sense of the living whole.

"I had also made it my habit to record everything, complete with drawings, and thus, not without a view to future use, pass my time pleasantly and commendably.

"I was best able to exploit this inclination, this developed gift, when the society gave me the important assignment of investigating the condition of the mountain dwellers and taking into our band the useful ones disposed to emigrate. Would you care to spend this lovely evening, when I have all sorts of pressing tasks, reading a section of my diary? I will not claim that it makes for especially pleasant reading; to me it always seemed interesting and somewhat instructive. After all, we always mirror ourselves in everything we produce."

Chapter Five

Lenardo's Diary

Monday the 15th

Late in the night, after a toilsome climb halfway up the mountain, I had reached a tolerably good inn, and before daybreak was awakened, to my great annoyance, from a refreshing sleep by a persistent tinkling and ringing of bells. A long line of packhorses passed by before I could manage to dress and hurry out ahead of them. Now I learned all too soon, as I set out, how unpleasant and irritating such company is. The monotonous ringing is deafening. The loads, which project far out on either side (they were carrying great sacks of cotton), tends to scrape against the cliffs, and when an animal, to avoid this, veers to the other

side, his load teeters over the abyss, which causes the spectator fear and giddiness. But worst of all, in either case it is not possible to slip past them and gain the lead.

Finally I reached a ledge on one side, where St. Christopher, who was carrying my luggage on his powerful back, greeted a man who was standing there and apparently reviewing the procession. He was, in fact, its leader; not only did he own a considerable number of the pack animals, and had rented the others, along with their drivers, but a smaller portion of the wares also belonged to him. His chief business, however, consisted in attending to the safe transport of goods for bigger merchants. In conversation with him I learned that this was cotton which had come from Macedonia and Cyprus by way of Trieste. It was being brought by mule and packhorse from the base of the mountains to these altitudes and beyond to the far side of the mountains, where countless spinners and weavers scattered through the valleys and gorges prepared the material for a large trade in wares much sought after abroad. For convenience in loading, the bales weighed either one and a half or three hundredweight, the latter constituting the full load of a packhorse. The man extolled the quality of this kind of cotton, comparing it with that from the East and West Indies, especially from Cayenne, which was the best known. He seemed thoroughly knowledgeable in his field, and since I, too, was not altogether unfamiliar with it, we had a pleasant and profitable conversation. In the meantime the entire procession had passed us, and I looked with dismay at the rocky path winding its way up the mountain, at the endless line of laden creatures, behind which we would be creeping along, baking among the rocks as the sun rose higher. While I was grumbling to my guide about this, a squat, cheerful man approached, carrying a relatively light load on a fairly large packframe. Greetings were exchanged, and it was soon clear from their hearty handshakes that St. Christopher and the new arrival knew each other well. I at once learned the following about the man. For the more remote mountain regions, whose individual inhabitants find it too far to go to market, there is a sort of low-ranking dealer or collector called the Yarn Carrier. He makes his way through all the valleys and hamlets, visiting house after house, bringing the spinners small supplies of cotton, and either receives yarn in exchange or buys it, regardless of its quality; he then sells it at some profit to the manufacturers down below.

As the talk now turned again to the discomfort of dawdling along behind the mules, the man promptly invited me to descend with him into a side valley that branched off just there, forming a different watershed. The decision was soon made, and after we had climbed with some effort over a rather steep ridge, we saw the further slopes before us, at first quite forbidding, for the rock had changed and be-

come slate-like. No vegetation enlivened the cliffs and rubble, and the descent threatened to be abrupt. Rivulets trickled together from several directions; we even passed a small lake surrounded by jagged cliffs. Finally single trees began to appear, and then clusters of pines, larches, and birches, then among them scattered rustic dwellings, to be sure of the most wretched sort, each hammered together by the inhabitants themselves out of interlocking logs, with the large, dark shingles on the roof weighted down with stones, so that the wind would not carry them off. Yet despite their forlorn exterior appearance, the confined interiors were not unpleasant; warm and dry, clean as well, they were in keeping with the happy look of the inhabitants, with whom one at once felt on a friendly rustic footing.

My guide seemed to be expected; people had even been watching for him through their little sliding windows, for he made it his custom to come on the same day of the week whenever possible. He bought the spun yarn, distributed new supplies of cotton; we then proceeded swiftly downhill to where several houses stand close together. As soon as they catch sight of us, the inhabitants come running to greet us; children join the throng and are delighted to receive a bun or a roll. There was joy everywhere, even more so when it turned out that St. Christopher, too, carried goodies in his load, and so likewise had the pleasure of garnering childish thanks. This was all the more pleasant for him because St. Christopher, like his companion, had a knack for getting on with little people.

The older folk, for their part, had all kinds of questions stored up; everyone wanted to hear about the war, which luckily was being waged far away, and even if nearer, would scarcely have threatened regions like these. They were glad, however, to be at peace, although another menace worried them. For it could not be denied that machine production was increasing throughout the land, and was gradually threatening to put their industrious hands out of work. But all kinds of reasons for hope and comfort could be adduced.

In the midst of this, our man was also asked for advice on various personal questions, and indeed had to serve not only as family counselor but also as doctor; he always carried a supply of miracle drops, salts, and balms.

As I entered the various houses I found an opportunity to pursue my old hobby and to learn about the technology of spinning. I noticed children carefully and diligently engaged in plucking the bolls of cotton apart and removing the seeds and fragments of the husk, along with other debris; they referred to this as "picking" the cotton. I asked whether this task was set aside for the children, but learned that during the winter evenings it was also undertaken by husbands and brothers.

The vigorous women who did the spinning next attracted my attention, as was proper. Their preparations are as follows: the "picked" or cleaned cotton is distributed evenly on the "cards," which in Germany are called "combs," and are then carded, during which the dust separates out and the fibers are all lined up in one direction. The cotton is then removed from the cards, twisted into hanks, and so made ready for the spinning wheel.

I was shown the difference between yarn twisted to the left or the right; the first is usually finer, and is produced by twisting the thread turned by the spindle around the whorl, as is clearly shown in the attached drawing (which like the rest, we unfortunately cannot include here).

The spinner sits before the wheel, not too high. Several of them held it steady between crossed feet, others only with their right foot, the left foot pulled back. She rotates the wheel with her right hand, stretching as high and far as she can, which produces beautiful movements and lets a slender figure, with body turning gracefully and nicely rounded arms, show to great advantage. The direction of the second method of spinning especially creates a picturesque contrast, so that our loveliest ladies would not have to fear any loss to their charm or grace, should they ever wish to take up the spinning wheel instead of the guitar.

In such surroundings, new, unaccustomed feelings pressed in upon me; the whirring wheels have a certain eloquence, the girls sing psalms and, though less often, other songs.

Siskins and goldfinches in hanging cages twitter along, and it would not be easy to find a picture of livelier activity than in a room where several spinners are at work.

Such wheel-spun yarn, however, is inferior to what is called "letter yarn." For this they use the best cotton, which has longer fibers than the other. Once it has been picked clean, instead of being carded it is placed on combs which consist of single rows of long steel teeth, and combed; then the longer and finer part is removed in bands with a blunt knife (the technical term is a "slice"). These are next wound up and placed in a paper envelope, and this is then fastened to the distaff. From such an envelope the cotton is now spun with a hand-held spindle, for which reason the process is called spinning from the letter, and the yarn is called letter yarn.

This work, which is done only by calm, careful individuals, gives the spinner a gentler appearance than does the use of the spinning wheel. If this last best becomes a woman of tall, slender figure, the hand-spinning is more flattering to a woman of delicate build and calm disposition. I saw these differing types in one room, engaged in different

employment, and at length could not decide whether it was more to the work or to the workers that I should devote my attention.

But I cannot deny that the mountain women, stimulated by the rare presence of guests, were friendly and obliging. They were especially pleased that I asked such precise questions about everything they told me, noticed things, and sketched their implements and simple mechanical equipment. I even made quick, delicate drawings of their arms, hands, and pretty limbs, which you may see on the facing page. Then, as evening fell, the completed work was displayed, the full spindles laid aside in the cases intended for that purpose, and the entire day's work carefully put away. We were by now better acquainted, but the work continued; they now busied themselves with the yarn-winder, and were much freer than before in showing me first the equipment and then how to operate it, while I took careful notes.

The yarn-winder has a wheel and an indicator, so that with each rotation a spring is lifted that advances the indicator every time a hundred loops have been loaded onto the winder. A thousand loops are called a skein, and its weight is an index of the fineness of the yarn.

For right-spun yarn there are 25 to 30 to a pound, while for left-spun yarn 60 or 80, sometimes even 90. A loop on the winder will run about seven quarter ells or slightly more, and my slim, diligent spinner claimed that she spun 4 or even 5 skeins a day on her wheel, which would be 5000 loops, amounting to 8 to 9000 ells of yarn; she was willing to wager on it, if we would stay another day.

At this the shy, modest letter-spinner could not keep silent, and asserted that she could spin a pound of cotton into 120 skeins in a comparable time. (Letter-yarn spinning goes more slowly than spinning by wheel, but is better paid. With the wheel one perhaps spins about twice as much.) She had just filled her winder, and she showed me now how the end of the yarn was wound around a few times and knotted. She lifted off the skein, twisted it so that it looped around itself, drew the end through, and could display the completed work of a skillful spinner with innocent satisfaction.

Since there was nothing more to be observed here, the mother rose and said that since the young man was interested in seeing everything, she would show him dry weaving, too. Sitting down at the loom she explained just as good-naturedly that they did only this kind of weaving, because it was suited for nothing but coarse calico, where the weft is woven dry and not very tightly. She then showed me such dry-woven fabric; it is always simple, without stripes or checks or any other pattern, and only four to five and a half quarter ells wide.

The moon shone clear in the sky and the Yarn Carrier insisted that we continue our pilgrimage, since he had a schedule to maintain and had to arrive on time in every place. The footpaths were good and

clear, he said, especially with such a torch as burned in the night sky. We for our part brightened the farewell with silk ribbons and kerchiefs, of which St. Christopher carried a sizeable packet. The gifts were given to the mother, to distribute among her family.

Tuesday the 16th, morning

The walk through the magnificent clear night was full of beauty and pleasure. We reached a somewhat larger cluster of cottages that might perhaps have been called a village; not far away a chapel stood on an open hill, and things began to look more inhabited and civilized. We passed enclosures which, to be sure, contained no gardens, but suggested sparse, carefully tended mowings.

We had reached a place where, along with spinning, weaving was more earnestly pursued.

Our journey of the day before, extended into the night, had consumed our sturdy and youthful energies. The Yarn Man climbed into the hay loft, and I was just about to follow him when St. Christopher handed me his packframe and went outside. I understood his kindly intention and let him have his way.

Yet first thing the following morning the entire family rushed together, and the children were strictly forbidden to step out the door, because a dreadful bear or some other monster must be lurking in the neighborhood. There had been such groaning and growling all through the night from the chapel that it was enough to make the very rocks and houses shake, and we were advised to be on our guard when we set forth today on our long foot journey. We tried our best to quiet these good people, but this appeared difficult in such lonely parts.

The Yarn Man now explained that he would finish his business as quickly as possible, then come and fetch us, since we had a long and arduous way ahead of us today; we would no longer be strolling along the valley but would have to clamber over a protruding mountain spur. I therefore decided to use the time as well as possible, and have my good hosts lead me into the antechamber of the art of weaving.

They were both elderly people, blessed late in life with two or three children; religious feelings and mystical ideas were evident in their surroundings, their activity, and manner of speech. I had arrived just at the beginning of a process that constitutes the transition from spinning to weaving, and since I found nothing else to distract me, I had them dictate the operation to me as it was in progress.

The first task, sizing the yarn, had been done the day before. The yarn is boiled in a dilute lime solution, consisting of starch and some carpenter's glue, which strengthens the threads. By morning the strands of yarn were already dry and preparations were made for spooling, that is for winding the yarn from the spool-winder onto spools. The

old grandfather, sitting by the stove, performed this simple task; a grandson stood near him and seemed eager to handle the spool-winder himself. In the meantime the father, in preparation for warping, set the spools onto a rack divided by horizontal rods; they moved freely around strong perpendicular wires and allowed the thread to unwind. Spools with coarser or finer yarn are set up in the order demanded by the pattern, or rather the stripes, in the weaving. An instrument (the warping paddle), shaped rather like a sistrum, has holes on both sides through which the threads are drawn. This is held in the right hand of the warper; with his left he holds the threads together and places them, going back and forth, on the warping reel. Once down from the top and once up from the bottom is called a turn, and depending on the set and width of the weaving many turns are made. The length runs either 64 or else only 32 ells. At the beginning of each turn one or two threads are passed over the fingers of the left hand, raising them up, with the alternate threads allowed to drop, and these are called the cross; in this pattern the joined threads are placed on the two pegs at the top of the warping reel. This is done so that the weaver can keep the threads even and in correct order. When the warping is complete, all the crosses are secured and each turn separated so that nothing can get tangled; then marks are made on the last turn with dissolved verdigris so that the weaver can reproduce the right length; finally it is all taken down and all wound up in the form of a large skein called the warp.

Wednesday, the 17th

We had set out early, before daybreak, and enjoyed magnificent lingering moonlight. The brightness breaking forth with the rising sun made a more inhabited and better cultivated land visible before us. If up above we had encountered nothing but stepping stones or occasionally a narrow plank bridge with a railing on only one side for crossing streams, here the ever widening waters were spanned by stone bridges. Harmonious elements seemed gradually to couple with the wilder ones, and a pleasing impression was experienced by all the wanderers.

Over the other side of the mountain, from a different watershed, a slender man with black locks came striding and, having good eyes and a strong voice, called from afar, "Greetings, in God's name, brother Yarn Carrier!" The latter let him come nearer, then, he, too called with astonishment, "God's thanks to you, brother Harness-Fixer! From what parts do you come? what an unexpected meeting!" The other replied as he approached, "For two months now I have been tramping about the mountains to mend the harnesses for the good people and set up their looms so that they can work on for a while without in-

terruption." At this the Yarn Man, turning to me, said, "Since you, young sir, show such love and devotion for this business and pay such careful attention to it, this man has come at just the right time. Indeed, I have been wishing him here the last few days; he would have explained everything to you better than the girls, for all their good will. He is a master of his trade and understands everything involved in spinning and the like—can describe, perform, maintain, and repair as necessary and to everyone's satisfaction."

I spoke with him, and as I reviewed some of what I had learned in the last few days and asked him to clear up some doubtful points, discovered a very intelligent man, even educated in a certain sense, entirely competent in his metier. I also told him about what I had seen yesterday of the first stages of weaving. He exclaimed happily, "It could not be better; I have come at just the right time to give such a worthy, dear gentleman necessary information about the oldest, most wonderful art, which first sets man apart from the beasts. We will come today to good, skilled folk, and I am no Harness-Fixer if you do not immediately comprehend the craft as well as I do myself."

He received heartfelt thanks, the conversation continued in various directions, and, after a rest and breakfast, we reached a somewhat helterskelter, though better built group of houses. He directed us to the best of these. As agreed, the Yarn Man went in first with me and St. Christopher; then, after the first greetings and a few pleasantries, the Harness-Fixer followed, and it was striking what joyful surprise his arrival produced in the family. Father, mother, daughters, and children gathered around him; the shuttle, about to fly through the warp, faltered in the hand of a handsome girl at the loom, and she also stopped working the treadles, stood up and at length came to offer her hand, slowly and shyly. Both the Yarn Man and the Harness-Fixer soon reestablished themselves with jests and anecdotes on the footing proper to friends of the family, and when all had enjoyed themselves a while, the good man turned to me and said, "We must not neglect you, my dear sir, in our joy at this reunion. We can chatter for days on end; you must be gone tomorrow. Let us introduce the gentleman to the mysteries of our art. He knows about sizing and warping; let us show him the rest; the maidens here will surely assist me. I see this loom is being dressed." It was the younger girl's loom around which they gathered. The older one sat down again at her loom and pursued her lively work with calm, affectionate mien.

I now observed the dressing closely. For this purpose the turns of the warp are run in order through a large comb exactly the width of the warp beam on which the dressing is to take place. This latter is provided with a slot fitted with a rod that runs through the end of the warp and is fastened in the slot. A small boy or girl sits under the

loom and holds the warp tightly while the weaver vigorously turns the warp beam with a handle and simultaneously sees that everything ends up in order. When everything is wound on, one round and two flat sticks, lease sticks, are slipped through the cross so that it holds, and then the beaming begins.

About a quarter of an ell of the previous weaving is left on the second warp beam, and from this about three quarters of an ell of threads run through the reed in the beater and through the heddles. Onto these threads now the weaver carefully ties the threads of the new warp, one after the other, and when she is finished, everything tied on is drawn through at the same time so that the new threads reach to the cloth beam, which is still empty. The torn-off threads of the previous weaving are knotted, thread is wound onto small bobbins that will fit into the shuttle, and the final preparation for weaving is made, namely finish sizing.

For the whole length of the loom the warp is thoroughly moistened with a lime solution prepared from glove leather and brushed on; then the lease sticks mentioned above that hold the cross are pulled back, all the threads arranged in exact order, and everything fanned with a goose wing tied to a stick until it is dry. And now the weaving can be begun and continued until it is necessary to size it again.

Sizing and fanning are usually left to young people who are being trained for the weaver's trade, or in the leisure of a winter evening a brother or lover performs this service for the pretty weaver, or these last at least prepare the bobbins with the weft thread.

Fine muslins are woven wet, that is to say, the skein of the weft thread is dipped in lime, wound on the small bobbins while still wet and immediately woven, which allows the cloth to be woven more evenly and look smoother.

Thursday, September 18th

Altogether I discovered something busy, indescribably vital, domestic, peaceful in the atmosphere of such a weaving room; several looms were in motion, spinning wheels and spool-winders were turning, and by the stove the old folk sat and chatted with visiting neighbors or friends. Occasionally there was singing to be heard, usually Ambrosius Lobwasser's four-part psalms, less frequently secular songs; now and then gay, ringing laughter breaks out when cousin Jacob has made some clever remark.

An especially nimble and diligent weaver can, if she has help, produce a 32-ell piece of not particularly fine muslin in one week; that, however, is very rare, and if there are other household chores, it is usually two weeks' work.

The beauty of the cloth depends on the even operation of the treadles, on the even pressure of the beater, and also on whether the weft is laid in wet or dry. Completely even and strong tension also contributes, to which end the weaver of fine cotton cloth hangs a heavy stone from the nail of the cloth beam. If the cloth is pulled very tight during the weaving (the technical term is high tension), then it lengthens noticeably, by $\frac{3}{4}$ of an ell per 32 ells, and about $1\frac{1}{2}$ ells per 64. This excess is the property of the weaver; she is paid extra for it or she saves it for kerchiefs, aprons, etc.

In the clearest, mildest moonlight, such as reigns only in the high mountains, the family and its guests sat out of doors in animated conversation. Lenardo was engrossed in thought. Even amidst the weaving and working and so many technical reflections and observations, the letter of reassurance from friend Wilhelm had again come to mind. The words he had so often read, the lines at which he had repeatedly gazed, reappeared before his inner eye. And as a favorite melody, before we realize it, all at once sounds softly in our innermost ear, so that gentle message was repeated in the calm soul, at one with itself.

“Household based on piety, enlivened and sustained by industry and order, not too restricted, not too broad, the best possible match of duties to abilities and strengths. She is the center of a group of manual workers in the purest, most original sense; here dwell restraint and far-reaching effectiveness, caution and moderation, innocence and diligence.”

But this time the memory was more stimulating than soothing. “Does not this general and laconic description,” he said to himself, “fit perfectly the circumstances that prevail here? Is there not here also peace, piety, ceaseless diligence? Only the far-reaching effectiveness does not strike me as entirely applicable. The good creature may well enliven a similar circle, but a wider, better one. She may feel as contented as these people here, perhaps even more contented, and look about her with more serenity and freedom.”

But now, as the conversation of the others grew more animated, and his attention was drawn more closely to what they were discussing, an idea he had been harboring for some hours came to the fore. Would not this very man, with his masterful command of tools and apparatus, be the most useful member of our society? He considered this and all the excellent qualities of the man that had already impressed themselves upon him. He therefore guided the conversation in that direction, and, as if in jest, but all the more directly, put the proposition to him whether he would be willing to join an important society and try the experiment of emigrating across the sea.

The man excused himself, insisting cheerfully that he was doing well here, and he expected to do even better; he was a native of the region, was used to it, known far and wide and received everywhere with trust. In general there would be no inclination to emigrate found in these valleys; no want threatened the inhabitants, and the mountains held their people fast.

"That is why I am surprised," the Yarn Man remarked, "that it is rumored Dame Susanna is going to marry the foreman, sell her property, and cross the ocean with her good money." Upon inquiry our friend learned that this was a young widow in comfortable circumstances who carried on a thriving trade in the products of the region. The traveler would be able to confirm this for himself, since their route tomorrow would bring them in good time to her door. "I have already heard her mentioned a few times," Lenardo replied, "as active and charitable in the valley, and forgot to inquire about her."

"But now let us take our rest," said the Yarn Man, "so that we may be up early tomorrow, to use what promises to be a fine day."

Here the manuscript ended, and when Wilhelm asked for the continuation, he was informed that it was not currently in the possession of his friends. It had been, he was told, sent to Makarie, who was to straighten out certain complications mentioned in it by means of love and intelligence, and undo certain troublesome knots. Our friend had to resign himself to this interruption and prepare to find pleasure in a sociable evening, in cheerful conversation.

Chapter Six

As evening fell and the friends were sitting in an arbor overlooking the countryside, an imposing figure stepped over the threshold, whom our friend instantly recognized as the barber of the morning. To the man's profound, silent obeisance, Lenardo replied, "You come, as always, most opportunely, and will not fail to entertain us with your talent. I suppose I may tell you," he continued, turning to Wilhelm, "something of the society whose bond I am proud to be. No one enters our circle unless he can display certain talents that would be useful or pleasing to any society. This man is a rough and ready surgeon, who in difficult cases, where resolve and physical strength are demanded, can readily assist his master. To his skill as a barber you yourself can testify. In this capacity he is as necessary to us as he is welcome. But since this occupation usually carries with it a great and often annoying loquacity, in the interest of self-improvement he has accepted a con-

dition, as everyone who wishes to live with us must restrict himself in one respect, that he may enjoy greater freedom in other respects. Thus he has renounced speech, insofar as it expresses ordinary or inconsequential things. But from this a talent in a different sort of speaking has developed, one that seems purposeful, clever, and pleasing, that is to say, the gift of storytelling.

"His life has been rich in remarkable experiences, which he used to fritter away in ill-timed chatter, but can now, under compulsion of silence, review in peace and put into order. Here the imagination comes into play and lends life and movement to events. With particular art and skill he recounts truthful fairy tales and fairy tale happenings. These often captivate us at a fitting time, when his tongue is released by me, as is now the case. I must also say in his praise that he has never repeated himself in the considerable while I have known him. And now I hope that this time, too, he will particularly excel, for the sake of our beloved and honored guest."

Red Mantle's face assumed a look of sprightly intelligence, and with no more ado he began to tell the following story.

The New Melusine

Honored gentlemen! Since I am aware that you do not particularly care for long speeches and introductions, I shall say no more than that I hope this time to perform exceptionally well. I have, to be sure, presented you with many a true story, to great and general satisfaction, but today, I may say, I have one to tell that far surpasses the others, and the memory of which, though it happened to me several years ago, still causes me some agitation when I remember it, and still gives hope of a final resolution. You could scarcely find its like.

I must first concede that I did not always conduct my life in such a way as to be entirely confident of the near future, or even of the next day. In my youth I was not a good manager, and often found myself in various difficulties. Once I set out upon a journey that was to bring me great profit, but I began a little too lavishly, and after starting in a first-class post chaise and then continuing for a while in the regular one, I at last found it necessary to face finishing it on foot.

As a lively fellow I had always been in the habit of looking around for the innkeeper's wife as soon as I arrived at an inn, or for the cook, and flattering her a little so that my score was usually reduced.

One evening, just as I was entering the posthouse of a small town, intending to proceed in my usual fashion, a fine two-seater drawn by four horses came clattering up to the door right behind me. I turned

and saw a young woman alone, without maid, without manservant. I hastened to open the carriage door and ask how I might be of service. As she stepped out, I saw a beautiful figure, and her lovely face was, on close observation, enhanced by a slight touch of sadness. I asked her again whether I might be of service to her in any way. "Oh, yes," she replied, "if you would very carefully take out the casket sitting on the seat and carry it inside. But I must beg you to hold it perfectly level and not to move or shake it in the slightest." I lifted the casket with care, she closed the carriage door, and together we went up the steps. She told the servants that she would spend the night here.

Now we were alone in the room, and she bade me set the casket on the table near the wall; as I could tell from some of her gestures that she wished to be alone, I took my leave, pressing a respectful but ardent kiss on her hand.

"Order supper for both of us," she said, and you may imagine with what pleasure I carried out this assignment, in my high spirits scarcely casting a glance at the innkeeper, his wife, or the servants. Impatiently I awaited the moment that would finally bring me to her again. Supper was served, we sat down opposite each other, I regaled myself for the first time in a good while with a fine meal, as well as with so entrancing a sight. It seemed as though she were growing more beautiful with every minute.

Her conversation was pleasant, yet she sought to deflect anything relating to affection and love. The table was cleared; I lingered, and tried all sorts of tricks to break her reserve, but in vain. She held me back with a sort of dignity I could not withstand. Against my will, I had to part from her at an early hour.

After a mostly wakeful night and troubled dreams I was up early, and inquired whether she had ordered horses. I heard she had not, and went out into the garden. Seeing her standing dressed at the window, I hurried in to her. When she came toward me, so lovely and even lovelier than yesterday, I was seized with desire and reckless boldness; I rushed to her and caught her in my arms. "Angelic, irresistible being!" I exclaimed, "Forgive me, but I cannot help myself." With incredible agility she escaped from my embrace, and I was not even able to plant a kiss on her cheek. "Control such sudden bursts of passion," she said, "if you do not want to forfeit a happiness that lies within your reach, but can be possessed only after several trials."

"Demand what you will, angelic spirit," I cried, "but do not cast me into despair!" She replied, smiling, "If you would devote yourself to my service, hear the terms. I have come here to visit a friend, and plan to spend several days with her. In the meantime I would like my coach and this casket to proceed on ahead. Would you see to that? There is nothing for you to do but to lift the casket in and out of the

coach with care, and when it is in the coach, sit beside it and watch over its safety. When you reach an inn, it is to be placed on a table, in a separate room, in which you may neither stay nor sleep. Each time you are to lock the room with this key, which locks and unlocks all doors and gives the lock the special property that it cannot be opened by anyone in the interval."

I looked at her, feeling most peculiar. I promised to do all this if I might hope to see her again soon, and if she would seal this hope with a kiss. She did so, and from that moment on, I was her slave. I should now order the horses, she said. We discussed the route I should take, and the places where I should stop and wait for her. Finally she pressed a purse of gold into my hand, and I pressed my lips onto her hands. She seemed moved at parting, and I no longer knew what I was doing, or should do.

When I returned from my errand, I found the door locked. I immediately tried the master key, and it passed the test perfectly. The door sprang open, and I found the room empty, with only the casket standing on the table where I had placed it.

The coach had rolled up; I carried the casket downstairs carefully, and placed it beside me. The innkeeper's wife asked, "But where is the lady?" A child answered, "She has gone into town." I said farewell to the people and drove away as if in triumph from the place where I had arrived the previous evening on foot, with dusty leggings. Now that I had leisure, you may well imagine that I considered this affair from every angle, counted the money, made various plans, and kept glancing occasionally at the casket. I proceeded straight ahead, did not stop at several stations, and made no pause until I had reached a stately town, to which she had directed me. Her instructions were carefully obeyed, the casket placed in a separate room and two wax tapers next to it, unlit, as she had ordered. I locked the room, settled myself in my own, and saw to my own comfort.

For a while I could occupy myself with memories of her, but very soon the time began to hang heavy. I was not accustomed to live without companionship, which I soon found to my taste at taverns and other public places. Under these circumstances my money began to melt away, and disappeared entirely from my purse one evening when I imprudently gave in to passionate gambling. When I returned to my room, I was beside myself. Stripped of money, but with the appearance of a rich man, I could expect a tidy bill, and, uncertain as to whether, or when, my fair lady would reappear, I was in the worst of straits. I longed for her with redoubled intensity and thought I could no longer live without her and her money.

After supper, which I scarcely enjoyed because I had to partake of it alone, I paced up and down the room, talked to myself, cursed myself,

threw myself on the floor, tore my hair, and carried on wildly. Suddenly I hear a soft movement in the locked room next to mine, and shortly after a knock on the bolted door. I pull myself together, reach for the master key, but the double doors fly open of themselves, and in the gleam of those lighted tapers my fair one comes toward me. I cast myself at her feet, kiss her dress, her hands; she raises me up, and I dare not embrace her, scarcely dare to look into her eyes. Nevertheless I frankly and ruefully confess my error.

"That is forgivable," she said, "only you have postponed, alas, your happiness and mine. Now you must travel another stretch into the world before we see each other again. Here is more gold," she said, "which should last you, if you manage it at all sensibly. But if wine and gambling have brought you into difficulties this time, be careful now of wine and women, and let me hope that our next meeting will be more joyful."

She stepped back over the threshold, the doors flew shut. I knocked, I pleaded, but nothing more was to be heard. When I asked for my score the following morning, the waiter smiled and said, "Now we know why you lock your doors in so artful and mysterious a fashion that no master key can open them. We imagined you had all sorts of money and valuables in there; but now we have seen your treasure descending the stairs, and it seemed in every sense worthy of being well guarded."

I made no reply to this, paid my bill, and climbed into the coach with my casket. I journeyed forth into the world once more, with the firmest intention of abiding in future by the warning of my mysterious friend. Yet I had hardly arrived in a large city again when I made the acquaintance of attractive young ladies, and simply could not tear myself away from them. They seemed to place a high price on their favor, for even as they kept me always at a certain distance, they drew me into one expenditure after another, and since my sole aim was to assure their pleasure, I once more failed to think of my purse, but paid and treated constantly, as circumstances dictated. But how great was my amazement and delight when, after a few weeks, I noticed that the purse had not lost its fullness, but was as round and plump as ever. Wanting to make sure of this wonderful quality, I sat down and counted, and wrote down the exact sum. I now began to live as merrily as before with my companions. There was no lack of outings, on land and on water, of dance and song and other pleasures. But now it required no great powers of observation to become aware that the purse was truly dwindling, as if by my accursed counting I had robbed it of its virtue of being uncountable. In the meantime, once embarked upon the life of enjoyment, I could not turn back, yet I soon came to the end of my cash. I cursed my situation, inveighed against my lady, who had

thus led me into temptation, was cross that she did not make another appearance, in my anger repudiated all my obligations toward her, and resolved to open the casket, to see whether it held anything that might be of help. Though it was not heavy enough to contain money, there might still be jewels inside, and these also would have been most welcome to me. I was about to carry out my purpose, but postponed it until night, in order to undertake the operation in peace and quiet, and hurried off to a banquet that had just been announced. Once again the merriment was in full swing, and we were powerfully stimulated by wine and the blare of trumpets when I had an unpleasant surprise. During the dessert an earlier admirer of my favorite beauty, returning from a journey, walked in unexpectedly, sat down by her side, and without much ceremony sought to assert his former rights. This soon led to anger, recriminations, and conflict; we both drew our swords, and I was carried home, sorely wounded and half dead.

The surgeon had bandaged me and departed; it was far into the night, and my attendant had fallen asleep. The door to the next room opened, my mysterious friend entered, and sat down at my bedside. She inquired how I was feeling; I did not reply, for I was weak and ill-humored. She continued speaking sympathetically, and rubbed my temples with a balm, so that I quickly felt much stronger, so strong that I could lose my temper and berate her. In a vehement tirade I cast all blame on her for my misfortunes, on the passion she had aroused in me, on her appearances, on her disappearances, on the boredom, and on the longing I was bound to feel. I became more and more vehement, as if overcome by fever, and at last swore that if she would not be mine, would not let me possess her and bind herself to me, I had no wish to go on living. I demanded a definite answer. As she hesitated to declare herself, I took leave of my senses completely and tore off the double and triple dressing on my wounds, determined to bleed to death. But how amazed I was to find my wounds all healed, my body spruce and gleaming, and my darling in my arms.

We were now the happiest pair on earth. We each begged the other's forgiveness, and hardly knew why. She promised to journey on with me, and soon we were seated together in the coach, with the casket across from us in place of the third person. I had never mentioned the casket to her. Even now it did not occur to me to speak of it, though it sat there in full sight, and by tacit agreement we both looked after it, as circumstances might require, though I alone lifted it in and out of the coach and took care of locking the doors, as before.

As long as there was still something in the purse, I had continued to pay; when my money ran out, I let her know. "That is easily helped," she said, and pointed to a pair of small pockets attached high up to the side of the coach, which I had noticed earlier but had never used.

She reached into one and drew out some gold pieces, likewise from the other some silver coins, and thus showed me the possibility of maintaining any degree of luxury we chose. So we journeyed on, from city to city, from country to country, and were happy together and with others, and I gave no thought to her ever leaving me again, the less so since for some time now she had been unmistakably with child, which only increased our happiness and our love. But alas, one morning I did not find her there, and because staying without her held no charms, I once more set out with the casket, tested the power of both the pockets, and found it undiminished.

All went well with my journey, and if previously I had not been inclined to reflect on my adventure, because I expected the strange state of affairs to take a perfectly natural turn, what now happened filled me with astonishment, anxiety, and even fear. Since I was accustomed to travel both day and night in order to keep moving, it often happened that I traveled in the dark, and when the lanterns chanced to go out, it would be completely black inside my coach. Once, in just such a dark night, I had fallen asleep, and when I awoke I saw light shining on the ceiling of the coach. I studied it and found that it issued from the casket, which seemed to have developed a crack as a result of the hot, dry weather that had come with summer. My thoughts of jewels revived, and I surmised there might be a carbuncle in the casket, and wanted certainty in the matter. I bent down as best I could to put my eye directly to the crack. But how great was my astonishment when I looked into a room, brightly lit by candles and furnished with excellent taste, indeed luxury, as if I were looking through an opening in a vault down into some royal apartment. To be sure, I could see only a part of the room, which let me guess at the rest. A fire seemed to be burning in the fireplace, by which stood an armchair. I held my breath and continued to observe. Presently from the other side of the room a woman appeared with a book in her hand, whom I at once recognized as my wife, although transformed into the tiniest of miniatures. The fair one sat down to read in the chair by the hearth, poked the fire with the sweetest little tongs, and as she moved, I could see that the darling little creature was likewise with child. But now I had to shift my uncomfortable position, and soon after, when I wanted to look in again and convince myself that it was no dream, the light had disappeared, and I looked into empty darkenss.

It may be imagined how amazed and even terrified I was. A thousand notions about this discovery went through my head, yet I could not make any sense of it. Thus preoccupied, I fell asleep, and when I awoke, believed I had dreamed it all. Yet I felt somewhat estranged from my beloved, and even as I handled the casket with still greater care, I did

not know whether I should wish for her return in full human size, or dread it.

After some time my beautiful beloved did return one day toward evening, dressed in white. Since the room lay in shadow, she seemed taller than I expected, and I recalled that all those belonging to the race of the nixies or gnomes gain noticeably in height as night approaches. She flew into my arms as always, but I could not press her with unalloyed joy to my troubled breast.

"My dearest," she said, "I can feel in your welcome what I alas already know. You have seen me in the meantime; you are now aware of the condition in which I find myself at certain times. Your happiness and mine has suffered a blow, is even at the point of being completely destroyed. I must leave you, and do not know if I shall ever see you again." Her presence, the grace with which she spoke, drove away almost every memory of the sight which had already appeared to me as but a dream. I embraced her with energy, convinced her of my passion, assured her of my innocence, told her how the discovery had been sheer accident, and in short did so much that she seemed reassured and attempted to reassure me.

"Examine your heart," she said, "to see whether this discovery has not impaired your love, whether you can forget that I am with you in two different forms, whether the diminution of my being will not also reduce your affection."

I gazed at her; she was more beautiful than ever, and I thought to myself, "Is it such a misfortune to have a wife who from time to time becomes a dwarf, so that one can carry her about in a casket? Would it not be much worse if she became a giant and tucked her husband into the chest?" My good spirits had returned. I would not have given her up for anything in the world. "Dearest heart," I replied, "let us stay and be as we were. Could either of us be better off? Use your comfortable little arrangement, and I promise you that I will carry the casket all the more carefully. How could the sweetest thing I have ever seen in my life make a bad impression on me? How happy lovers would be, could they possess such miniature images! And in the end, it was merely such an image, a little sleight-of-hand. You are testing me and teasing me, but you shall see how steadfast I remain."

"The matter is more serious than you think," replied my fair one, "although I am quite pleased that you take it so lightly, since it can still have the happiest outcome for both of us. I will trust you and for my part do everything possible, only promise me never to make a reproach of this discovery. To this I add another urgent request: be more careful than ever about wine and wrath."

I promised what she requested, and would have promised more and more. But she herself turned the conversation to other things, and all

went on as before. We had no reason to change our place of residence; the town was large, the company varied, and the season gave occasion for many country and garden festivities.

At all such events my wife was most welcome, indeed in demand with men and women alike. Polished, ingratiating conduct coupled with a certain nobility made her liked and respected by everyone. In addition, she played the lute magnificently and sang to her own accompaniment, and every sociable evening had to be crowned by her talents.

I must confess that I have never been able to make much of music, that, in fact, it has an unpleasant effect on me. My lady love, who had soon observed this, never tried to entertain me in this fashion when we were by ourselves, but she seemed to compensate herself in society, when she usually found a throng of admirers.

And now, why should I deny it, our last discussion, despite my best intentions, had not been sufficient to put the matter to rest for me; rather, it had worked very strangely on my feelings, without my being fully aware of it. One evening, in the midst of a large party, the suppressed rancor burst forth, resulting in the most serious loss for me.

Now that I think about it, I loved my beauty much less after that unfortunate discovery, and presently I grew jealous of her, which had never occurred to me earlier. One evening at dinner, where she and I sat diagonally across from each other at some distance, I was enjoying myself with both of my table partners, a pair of damsels whom I had found attractive for some time. Amidst joking and flirting, the wine flowed freely, while on the other side of the table a pair of music lovers had taken possession of my wife and were encouraging and leading the company in song, individually and in chorus. This put me in a bad humor. The two amateurs seemed too forward; the singing made me irritable, and when they demanded a solo verse from me as well, I became really incensed, emptied my glass, and brought it down hard on the table.

I was soon mollified, to be sure, by the charms of my neighbors, but it is a bad business with anger, once it has been aroused. It seethed away in secret, although everything should have disposed me to pleasure and compliance. On the contrary, I became more spiteful when a lute was produced and my beauty played and sang, to the admiration of all the rest. Unfortunately, general silence was called for. So I was not even allowed to chatter anymore, and the chords set my teeth on edge. Was it any wonder, then, that finally the smallest spark ignited the powderkeg?

The singer had just finished a song, to the greatest applause, when she looked in my direction, truly in the most loving manner. Unfortunately her gaze did not penetrate my anger. She saw me down a cup

of wine and pour myself another. She shook her right forefinger at me, in tender warning. "Remember that it is wine," she said, no more loudly than was necessary for me to hear it. "Water is for nixies!" I exclaimed. "My good ladies," she said to my neighbors, "wreath the cup with your graces, that it may not be emptied too often." "You are not going to let yourself be ordered around," hissed one of them in my ear. "What does the dwarf want?" I shouted, gesturing wildly so that I knocked over the cup. "How much has been spilt here!" cried the wondrous beauty, and she struck a chord on her lute, as though she wished to draw the attention of the company away from this disturbance and back toward herself. She succeeded, the more so when she stood up, as if to play more comfortably, and continued her prelude.

When I saw the red wine running over the tablecloth, I came back to my senses. I recognized the great mistake I had made, and was filled with remorse. For the first time the music spoke to me. The first strophe she sang was a friendly farewell to the company, which could still feel itself united in good fellowship. In the next strophe, it was as if the group were dissolving, each felt himself alone, isolated, no one seemed present any longer. But what shall I say of the last strophe? It was directed toward me alone, the voice of wronged love, which takes leave of sullenness and selfishness.

In silence I escorted her home, expecting the worst. But hardly had we reached our room when she showed herself most friendly and charming, even playful toward me, and made me the happiest of men.

The next morning I said to her, in all confidence and affection, "You have often sung at the request of company, as for example that touching song of farewell last night. Now sing for me for once, a pretty, cheerful greeting for this morning hour, so that we may feel as though we were first coming to know one another."

"That I cannot do, my friend," she replied gravely. "Yesterday's song referred to our parting, which must now take place at once. For I can tell you only that your insult contrary to promise and pledge has the worst consequences for us both. You have squandered a great happiness, and I, too, must renounce my dearest wishes."

As I now pressed her and begged her to explain herself better, she replied, "That I can now do, alas, for my time with you is at an end. Hear, therefore, what I should have preferred to conceal from you to the last. The form in which you saw me inside the casket is my true and natural form. For I belong to the line of King Eckwald, the powerful ruler of the dwarfs, of whom the true history has so much to report. Our people are industrious and busy today, as they were of old, and hence are easy to govern. But you must not imagine they are backward in their work. In the past they were most famous for making

swords that followed the enemy when they were hurled at him, invisible chains that mysteriously bound up one's adversaries, impenetrable shields, and the like. Nowadays, however, they occupy themselves chiefly with objects of convenience and ornament, and surpass every other people on earth in this respect. You would be amazed if you were to go through our workshops and warehouses. All would be well, if it were not that the entire nation, but especially the royal family, is affected by a particular circumstance."

Since she paused for a moment, I besought her to reveal more about this curious secret, with which she obliged me straightaway.

"It is well known," she said, "that God, as soon as he had created the world, and the earth had dried out and the mountains stood there, mighty and magnificent—that God, I say, at once created the dwarfs, before all else, so that there might be intelligent beings who could marvel at and revere His wonders in tunnels and chasms deep inside the earth. It is further known that this little race later rose up and thought to assert mastery over the earth, for which reason God created dragons, to drive the dwarfs back into the mountains. But since the dragons settled into the large caverns and crevices themselves and lived there, and many belched fire and spread much other devastation, that caused the little dwarfs great distress and trouble, so much so that they did not know what to do, and turned in humble entreaty to the Lord, and beseeched Him in fervent prayers to exterminate this unclean race of dragons. Although in His wisdom He could not bring Himself to destroy His own creature, still the plight of the poor little dwarfs so touched His heart that He promptly created the giants, who would do battle with the dragons and, if not extirpate them, at least reduce their numbers.

"But when the giants had fairly well finished off the dragons, they, too, fell prey to pride and presumption, and began perpetrating many outrages, especially against the good little dwarfs, who then again turned to the Lord in their distress, who in His sovereign power then created the knights, who battle the giants and the dragons and live in perfect harmony with the dwarfs. With that, this phase of the Creation was concluded, and it is the case that since then giants and dragons, like knights and dwarfs, always stick together. From this you can see, my friend, that we belong to the oldest race on earth, which, to be sure, represents a great honor, but also carries great disadvantages.

"But since nothing on earth can exist forever, but everything which was once great must become small and dwindle, we, too, are in the situation that since the creation of the world we have been constantly dwindling and growing smaller, but most of all the royal family, which, because of its pure blood, is the first to undergo this fate. Therefore many years ago our wise men thought of a solution: that from time

to time a princess of the royal house should be sent out into the world to wed an honorable knight, so that the race of dwarfs should be renewed and saved from utter ruin."

While my fair one spoke these words with utmost sincerity, I looked at her with distrust, for it seemed as if she wanted to pull my leg in some way. As to her tiny origins I had no doubt, but that she had chosen me instead of a knight aroused some mistrust, since I knew myself too well to believe that my ancestors had been directly created by God.

I concealed my astonishment and doubts and asked her kindly, "But tell me, my dear child, how do you come by this large and imposing form? For I know few women who could match you in magnificence of shape." "That you shall learn," replied my fair one. "Since time immemorial it has been customary in the council of the dwarf kings that every extraordinary step should be avoided as long as possible, which I also find right and proper. They would perhaps have delayed even further before sending a princess out into the world, had not my younger brother been born so tiny that the nurses lost him out of his swaddling clothes, and no one knows what has become of him. In this case, utterly unheard of in the annals of the dwarf kingdom, the wise men were gathered, and, to be brief, it was decided to send me out wooing."

"It was decided!" I exclaimed, "That is all well and good. People can decide, people can resolve, but to give a dwarflet such a divine form—how did your wise men manage that?"

"That, too," she said, "was anticipated by our ancestors. In our royal treasury lay an enormous gold ring. I am describing it as it seemed to me when it was shown to me in its place when I was still a child, for it is the very one I have here on my finger. The task was undertaken in the following fashion: I was instructed in everything that lay in store for me, and taught what to do and what to avoid.

"An exquisite palace, patterned after the favorite summer residence of my parents, was constructed: a main building, two wings, and whatever else one could wish for. It stood at the entrance of a great rocky cleft, and it adorned it beautifully. On the appointed day, the court assembled there, and my parents brought me. The army paraded, and twenty-four priests bore, not without difficulty, the miraculous ring on an elaborate litter. It was placed on the threshold of the building, just inside, where one would have to step over it. Various ceremonies were performed, and after heartfelt farewells I set to work. I stepped forward, placed my hand upon the ring, and at once began to grow perceptibly. In a few moments I had reached my present size, and promptly placed the ring on my finger. In the twinkling of an eye, windows, doors, and gates closed, the wings withdrew into the main building, and instead

of the palace, a casket stood beside me, which I picked up forthwith and carried away with me, not without distinct pleasure in being so tall and strong, though still, to be sure, a dwarf compared to trees and mountains, rivers and landscapes, but nevertheless a giant compared to grass and plants, and especially to the ants, with whom we dwarfs do not always have the best relations, and by whom, therefore, we are often plagued terribly.

"How I fared on my pilgrimage before I met you would take long to tell. Suffice it to say, I tested many a man, but none but you seemed worthy to renew and immortalize the stock of the magnificent Eckwald."

As she told me all these tales, my head often wobbled of itself, without my actually having shaken it. I asked various questions, without receiving any proper answers to them, but rather learned, to my great sorrow, that after what had happened she absolutely had to return to her parents. To be sure, she hoped to come back to me, but for now she had to present herself at court without fail, else all would be lost for her, as well as for me. The purses would soon stop paying, with all kinds of other consequences.

When I heard that our money might run out, I did not ask what more might happen. I shrugged and fell silent, and she seemed to understand me.

We packed up and settled ourselves in the coach, the casket, in which I could not make out any features of a palace, across from us. Thus we proceeded for several way stations. Fares and tips were easily and generously paid from the pouches left and right, until finally we reached a mountainous region, and had barely got out when my fair one went on ahead and I followed with the casket at her command. She led me by fairly steep paths to a narrow meadow, through which the waters of a spring wound, now coursing swiftly, now flowing quietly. She pointed out a hummock, bade me set the casket down there, and said, "Farewell! You will easily find your way back; remember me; I hope to see you again."

At this moment I felt as though I could not part from her. This was one of the days—or one of the hours, if you will—when her beauty was at its height. To be alone with such an exquisite being, on the green turf, amidst grass and flowers, sheltered by cliffs, the water gurgling: what heart could have remained unfeeling? I wanted to take her by the hand, to embrace her, but she thrust me away and threatened me, though still lovingly enough, with great danger if I did not depart at once.

"Is there no possibility at all," I exclaimed, "for me to stay with you, for you to keep me with you?" I accompanied these words with such sorrowful gestures and tones that she seemed moved, and after

some hesitation admitted that a continuation of our union was not entirely impossible. Who could have been happier than I! My insistence, which became ever more vehement, finally forced her to come out with what she had in mind, and to reveal to me that, if I were to decide to become as small with her as I had seen her, then I could stay with her even now, and enter her home, her kingdom, her family. This proposal was not altogether to my liking, but at this moment I simply could not tear myself away from her. Having been in any case accustomed to miraculous occurrences for some time now, and being of an impulsive nature, I agreed, and said she might do with me as she liked.

Without further ado I had to hold out the little finger of my right hand; she rested her own against it, and with her left hand gently drew the gold ring from her finger and let it slip over my own. No sooner had this happened than I felt a violent pain in my finger, as the ring contracted, pinching me horribly. I gave a great cry and involuntarily reached out for my fair one, but she had vanished. I can find no words to express my inner state at that moment; I have nothing else to say, except that I soon found myself a tiny little person in a forest of grass stalks beside my lady. Our joy at seeing each other after so short, yet so strange, a separation—or, if you prefer, at our reunion without separation—was boundless. I threw my arms around her, she returned my caresses, and the small pair felt as happy as the large one.

With some effort we now climbed up a hill, for the turf had become an almost impenetrable forest for us. But finally we reached a clearing, and how surprised I was to see there a massive, ordered shape, which I soon recognized as the casket, in the condition in which I had placed it there.

“Go up to it, my friend, and knock on it with the ring, and you shall see a real wonder,” said my beloved. I stepped up to it, and hardly had I knocked when I truly experienced the greatest wonder. Two wings emerged, and at the same time various parts peeled off like chips and scales, revealing doors, windows, colonnades, and everything that a complete palace requires.

Anyone who has seen one of Röntgen’s ingenious writing desks, where at a single touch many springs and hinges come into motion, so that the writing surface and implements, pigeonholes for letters and money appear simultaneously, or in quick succession—anyone who has seen one can imagine how that palace unfolded, into which my sweet companion now drew me. In the main hall I instantly recognized the fireplace that I had previously seen from above, and the armchair in which she had sat. And when I looked up, I really believed I could still detect the crack in the vault through which I had peeped in. I will spare you description of the rest; suffice it to say that all was spacious,

luxurious, and tasteful. Hardly had I recovered from my amazement when I heard military music in the distance. My lovely partner jumped for joy and announced with delight the approach of her honored father. We stepped onto the threshold and beheld a brilliant procession emerging from a great fissure in the rock. Soldiers, attendants, house officials, and a brilliant court followed one another. Finally a golden throng appeared, and in it the king himself. When the entire procession was arrayed before the palace, the king and his retinue stepped forward. His loving daughter hastened toward him, pulling me along with her; we cast ourselves at his feet, he raised me up most graciously, and as I stood before him, I noticed for the first time that I naturally had the most imposing stature in this tiny world. We entered the palace together, where the king delivered a well-phrased speech in the presence of his entire court, in which he expressed his surprise at finding us here, bade us welcome, accepted me as his son-in-law, and set the next day for the wedding ceremony.

How dreadfully upset I was when I heard him speak of marriage: until now I had feared it almost more than music itself, which otherwise seemed to me the most hateful thing on earth. Those who make music, I used to say, at least imagine that they are at one with each other and working in harmony. When they have tuned long enough and abused our ears with all sorts of dissonances, they firmly believe that the situation is under control and each instrument is in tune with the next. Even the conductor shares this happy delusion, and so they go at it hammer and tongs, jarring on the ears of the rest of us. With marriage, on the other hand, not even this is the case; even though it is only a duet and one might think that two voices, or two instruments, could be harmonized to some extent, that happens but seldom. For if the husband sounds one note, then the wife immediately takes it higher, and the husband higher still, so that the whole thing passes from chamber music to full chorus and yet higher, until at last even the wind instruments cannot follow. And so, since harmonic music remains repugnant to me, no one can mind if I find the disharmonic variety intolerable.

Of all the festivities that filled the rest of the day, I am neither willing nor able to give an account, for I paid scant attention to them. Neither the rich food nor the fine wines tasted good to me at all. I brooded and pondered what I might do. But the possibilities were few. I decided simply to slip away at nightfall and hide myself somewhere. I succeeded in reaching a crack in the rocks into which I could squeeze and be fairly well hidden. My first concern after this was to get the wretched ring off my finger, but I could not manage it. Instead I felt it grow tighter and tighter as soon as I tried to pull it off, so that I suffered

terrible pain, which, however, decreased as soon as I desisted from my intention.

I awoke early—for my small person had slept soundly—and wanted to look about me, when I felt something like rain starting. Great quantities of something like sand and grit seemed to be falling through grass, leaves, and flowers. But how horrified I was when everything around me came alive, and an innumerable host of ants came tumbling down upon me. No sooner had they noticed me than they attacked me from every side, and although I defended myself stoutly and bravely enough, they finally swarmed all over me, pinched and tormented me so much that was I was glad when I heard a call for me to surrender. I did indeed surrender, and instantly, upon which an ant of distinguished stature approached, and politely, even with respect, commended himself to me. I learned that the ants had become allies of my father-in-law, and that in the present case he had called them up and charged them to bring me back. So here I was, a little creature in the hands of still smaller creatures. I saw the marriage looming and had to thank God if my father-in-law was not angry with me or if my fair one was not vexed.

Let me pass over the ceremonies in silence; in short, we were married. However merrily and enjoyably things went with us, there nevertheless came those solitary hours in which one is lured into reflection, and something happened that had never happened to me before; what that was, and how it came about, you shall hear.

Everything about me was completely suited to my present shape and needs; the bottles and glasses were correctly scaled for a small drinker, indeed, if you will, somewhat better than among us. The delicate bites of food tasted wonderful to my small palate, a kiss from my wife's little mouth was absolutely delicious, and I would not deny that novelty made all these conditions highly agreeable. But for all this I had unfortunately not forgotten my previous state. I still retained some sense of my former size, which made me restless and unhappy. For the first time I comprehended what philosophers mean when they speak of those ideals which supposedly cause mankind such mental torment. I had an ideal of myself and sometimes appeared to myself in dreams as a giant. In short, a wife, the ring, my dwarfish stature, and so many other constraints made me thoroughly unhappy, so that I began to plan in earnest for my liberation.

Since I was convinced that the entire magic lay in the ring, I decided to file it off. To this end, I purloined some files from the court jeweler. Fortunately I was left-handed and all through my life had never done anything right. I kept at the task bravely. It was not easy, for the tiny gold band, though it looked slender enough, had grown thicker in proportion to its loss of diameter. I devoted all my free hours in secret

to this job, and was clever enough to step outside when the metal was almost filed through. That proved wise, for all at once the gold band sprang violently from my finger, and my body shot up so vigorously that I truly thought I would bump into the sky and would in any case have burst the vault of our summer palace, would, in fact, have destroyed the entire building in my new clumsiness.

There I stood once more, to be sure much bigger than I had been, but also, so it seemed to me, much more stupid and clumsy. And when I had recovered from my confusion, I saw the coffer standing near me. I found it rather heavy when I lifted it and carried it down the path to the posthouse, where I immediately ordered horses and set off. Once in motion, I promptly tried the little pouches to either side. In place of the money, which seemed to have run out, I found a little key. It belonged to the coffer, in which I found a passable substitute. As long as that lasted, I used the coach; afterward the coach was sold to pay my way in the post chaise. The coffer was the last to be disposed of, for I kept hoping it would replenish itself, and so, ultimately, I came, though by something of a detour, to the good woman's hearth where you first made my acquaintance.

Chapter Seven

Hersilie to Wilhelm

Acquaintances, though they may seem of no particular significance when they begin, often have most important consequences, especially yours, which from the first moment was not insignificant. The peculiar key came into my hands as a strange pledge; now I possess the casket as well. Key and casket—what do you say to that? What can one say? Hear how it came about:

A refined young man calls on my uncle and tells him that the curious dealer in antiquities who was long in contact with you died recently, and left him all of his remarkable estate, but at the same time charged him to return without delay everything belonging to others that had merely been deposited with him. As the old man said, one's own property was no worry, since one bore the loss of them alone. But he permitted himself to keep other people's possessions only in special cases. He did not wish to burden the young man with this responsibility; indeed, he forbade him, with paternal love and authority, to assume it. And with this he brought out the casket, which, though I knew it already from description, still struck me as quite exceptional.

My uncle, after he had examined it from every side, gave it back, and said that he, too, had made it a principle to act in the same spirit and not to burden himself with any antique, however beautiful and wonderful, if he did not know to whom it had belonged previously and what historical curiosities were connected with it. Since this casket bore neither letters nor numerals, neither a date nor any other indication by which one might infer who had owned it or made it, it was utterly useless and without interest for him.

The young man stood there in great perplexity, and after some reflection asked whether he would allow him to leave it in the custody of the court. Uncle smiled, and turning to me, said, "This would be a nice business for you, Hersilie. You have all sorts of jewelry and precious little objects, too. Add this to the rest. For I would wager that our friend, toward whom you were not indifferent, will return one of these days and fetch it."

I must write all this, if I want to tell the truth, and I must also confess I looked at the casket with envious eyes, and a certain covetousness seized hold of me. It pained me to think of this magnificent little treasure chest, which Fate had destined for our dear Felix, sitting in the rusty old vault of the courthouse. Like a divining rod, my hand reached for it; what little good sense I have held my hand back. I already had the key, but this I could not reveal, and was I to torture myself by leaving the lock unopened, or else surrender to the forbidden audacity of opening it? At any rate, I do not know whether it was wish or premonition: I imagined you were coming, were coming soon, would already be here when I went back to my room. In short, I felt so strange, so odd, so flustered, as I always do when I am startled out of my calm good humor. I shall say no more, shall offer neither description nor apologies; let it suffice that the casket lies before me in my coffer, the key beside it, and if you have a spark of sensitivity or sympathy, you will imagine what I am feeling, how many passions are warring inside me, how I wish you here, and probably Felix as well, so that this may end, or that at least some interpretation be provided for all this mysterious finding, refinding, separation and reuniting; and even if I should not be rescued from all this confusion, I still wish fervently that all this may be clarified, be ended, even if, as I fear, something worse should befall me.

Chapter Eight

Among the papers before us for editing, we find this anecdote, which we may include here without further introduction, since our affairs are

becoming ever more serious, and we are unlikely to have room further on for irregularities of this sort.

All in all, the reader may find some pleasure in this tale, as it was told by St. Christopher one pleasant evening to a circle of merry companions.

The Perilous Wager

It is well known that as soon as things are going well for people and are more or less to their liking, they do not know what to do with their high spirits. So it was that bands of mischievous students would spend their holidays traveling about the country and playing pranks of all sorts, which, of course, did not always have the best of consequences. They were of very different sorts, such as student life brings and joins together. Despite differences in birth and fortune, in intellect and education, they swarmed along in a common love of fun, full of merry doings. They often chose me as a companion; for if I could carry heavier loads than any of them, they also had to honor me with the title of a great prankster, and this chiefly because I carried out my capers more rarely, but all the more effectively, as the following will demonstrate.

In the course of our wanderings we had reached a pleasant mountain village, which, although out of the way, had the advantage of a post-house and, in great solitude, a pair of pretty girls as inhabitants. We wanted to rest, while away our time, flirt, live more cheaply for a while, and thus have more money to squander.

It was right after dinner, when some felt themselves in a heightened state, others in a depressed one. The latter went to bed and slept off their tipsiness, while the others would have liked to give it free rein in some mischief. We had a couple of large rooms in the wing, giving on the courtyard. A fine equipage with four horses clattered up, drawing us to the window. The lackeys leaped from the box and helped a gentleman of dignified and distinguished appearance to descend. Despite his years, he still moved vigorously enough. I was struck first by the newcomer's large, well-formed nose, and I cannot say what evil spirit possessed me that I instantly conceived the maddest sort of plan, and without further thought began to execute it at once.

"What do you think of this gentleman?" I asked the others. "He looks like someone who tolerates no nonsense," one of them replied. "Yes, yes," said another, "he has quite the look of a high and mighty Touch-me-not." "In spite of that," I countered boldly, "what will you wager that I will tweak his nose without any ill effects to me, that, in fact, I will earn his polite thank-you for it?"

"If you bring it off," said Rowdy, "everyone will give you a louis d'or."

"Collect the money for me," I exclaimed, "I am counting on you." "I would rather pluck a hair from a lion's muzzle," remarked Tiny. "I have no time to lose," I replied, and ran down the stairs.

At the first sight of the stranger I had noticed that he had a heavy growth of beard, and suspected that none of his attendants knew how to shave. I now encountered the waiter and asked him, "Hasn't the new arrival asked for a barber?" "So he has," the waiter answered, "and it is urgent. For the past two days the gentleman's valet has not been with him. The gentleman absolutely insists on being rid of his beard, and our only barber is off God knows where in the neighborhood."

"Then present me," I replied. "Introduce me as barber to the gentleman, and I will do you credit." I took the shaving kit they had in the inn and followed the waiter.

The old gentleman received me with gravity, looked me up and down, as if he could guess my skill from my physiognomy. "Do you know your trade?" he said to me.

"I do not like to boast," I replied, "but there are not many equal to me." Moreover I was on sure ground, for I had practiced the noble art from an early age, and was especially known for shaving with my left hand.

The room in which the gentleman was making his toilette gave on the courtyard, and was so situated that my friends could conveniently see in, especially if the windows were open. Nothing more was needed by way of preparations. My client had seated himself and covered himself with his towel. I stepped forward modestly and said, "Your Excellency, in the exercise of my art, I have noticed the oddity that I shave better and give more satisfaction with humble folk than with those of high station. I have thought a long time about this and have sought the reason now here, now there, but have finally determined that I do my job much better out in the open air than in closed rooms. If Your Excellency would therefore give me leave to open the window, you would soon enjoy the beneficial effect, to your own satisfaction."

He agreed, I opened the window, gave my friends a sign, and began to lather the strong beard with style. With equal adroitness and lightness I scraped the stubble from his skin, and when I came to the upper lip did not fail to take my patron by the nose and bend it conspicuously back and forth, placing myself so that my friends would have to see it, to their great delight, and acknowledge that their side had lost the wager.

With great dignity the old gentleman moved to the mirror; it was evident that he was looking at himself with no little pleasure, and

truly, he was a very handsome man. Then he turned to me with an intense, dark, but friendly look and said, "You deserve, my friend, to be praised above many of your tribe, for I find in you fewer annoying habits than in others. You do not pass two or three times over the same place, but manage with a single stroke. Nor do you, as many do, wipe the razor on your palm and spread the dirt all over a person's nose. Your skill with your left hand is especially admirable. Here is something for your pains," he said, handing me a gulden. "There is only one thing you should learn: one does not take persons of rank by the nose. If in the future you eschew this peasant custom, you might well prosper in the world."

I bowed deeply, promised all sorts of things, besought him, if he should by any chance return, to honor me again, and hurried as fast as I could to our young friends, who had begun to cause me some anxiety. They had been making such a racket and laughing so loudly, had been cavorting about the room as though mad, clapping and calling, waking the sleepers and retelling the incident with ever renewed laughter and tumult, so that I myself, when I entered the room, closed the windows before all else and begged them in God's name to quiet down. But finally I had to laugh myself over the ridiculous performance that I had carried out with such solemnity.

When at last the tumultuous waves of laughter had somewhat subsided, I considered myself fortunate; I had the gold pieces in my pocket, along with my well-earned gulden, and thought myself well provided for, which was all the more welcome, since our party had decided to break up the following day. But we were not destined to leave in a decorous and orderly manner. The story was too delightful to keep to ourselves, however much I had entreated and beseeched the others to be still, at least until the old gentleman had departed. One of us, nicknamed Blabbermouth, had an affair going with the daughter of the house. They had a rendezvous, and God knows if he had no better way to entertain her, but in any case, he told her of the prank, and the two of them laughed themselves sick over it. Nor was that all; the girl spread the tale around, and it must finally have reached the ears of the old gentleman, just before he retired for the night.

We were sitting more quietly than usual, for we had been riotous enough all day long, when suddenly the little waiter, who was very devoted to us, dashed in, crying, "Run for it, they're coming to kill you!" We jumped up and wanted to hear more, but he was already out of the door. I ran to slide the bolt. But already we heard knocking and pounding; we even thought we heard it being splintered by an ax. Mechanically we withdrew into the second room. We had all fallen silent. "We are betrayed," I exclaimed. "The devil has us all by the nose."

Rowdy reached for his sword, while I once again demonstrated my enormous strength and all by myself pushed a heavy dresser in front of the door, which fortunately opened inward. But we could already hear the din in the adjacent room, and violent blows on our door.

Rowdy seemed determined to defend himself, but I repeatedly called to him and the others, "Save yourselves! You will get not only a good drubbing but also a tongue-lashing, which is worse for those of good birth." The girl rushed in, the same who had given us away, now desperate at the thought that her lover's life was in danger. "Away, away!" she cried. "I'll lead you through the attics, sheds, and passageways. Come, all of you, and the last one pull up the ladder."

Now they all crowded through the back door, while I stayed behind to lift a chest onto the dresser to hold back the already broken panels of the besieged door. But my steadfastness and fighting spirit would be my downfall.

When I ran after the others, I found the ladder had already been drawn up, and saw myself deprived of any hope of saving my skin. There I stand, the true culprit, with no prospect of escaping in one piece, with bones unbroken. And who knows—but leave me standing there thinking, since I am here to tell the tale. I will only add that this foolhardy prank brought terrible results.

The old gentleman, mortified at having endured ridicule without revenge, brooded over it, and it is claimed that this incident resulted in his death, if not directly, then at least in conjunction with other factors. His son, seeking to track down the perpetrators, unfortunately discovered that Rowdy had been involved, and, achieving certainty only years later, challenged him to a duel. The wound that handsome man received disfigured and afflicted him for the rest of his life. For his antagonist, too, this affair ruined several good years, because of chance events that issued from it.

Since every tale is actually meant to teach something, all of you will find the direction in which this one points abundantly clear.

Chapter Nine

The day of great moment had dawned; today the first steps were to be taken toward the general emigration; today would decide who would actually go out into the world and who would prefer to stay on the contiguous soil of the old world and seek his fortune.

A merry song rang through all the streets of the cheerful town. Groups formed; the individual members of each craft joined together and, all singing with one voice, proceeded into the hall, according to an order determined by lot.

The leaders, as we shall designate Lenardo, Friedrich, and the bailiff, were about to follow the others and take their rightful seats, when a personable man approached them and requested permission to join the assembly. It would have been impossible to refuse him anything, so well-bred, civil, and amiable was his manner, which made his imposing figure, suggestive of the army as well as of the court and society, appear most pleasing. He entered with the others, and they assigned him a place of honor. All had been seated; Lenardo remained standing and addressed them as follows:

“When we, my friends, look at the continent’s most populous provinces and kingdoms, we find that whenever useful land appears, it has been cultivated, planted, ordered, beautified, and to the same degree desired, taken possession of, secured, and defended. This should convince us of the high value of land ownership and make us regard it as the first and best asset man can acquire. If, upon closer inspection, we now find that love for parents and for children, intimate ties to fellow inhabitants of countryside and town, as well as the general feeling of patriotism, are all founded directly on the soil, then that urge to grasp and lay claim to space, on large scale and small, appears as ever more significant and estimable. Yes, Nature has ordained it so! A man, born on the land, comes through habit to belong to it; the two grow together, forming the most beautiful ties. Who, then, would be so monstrous as to disturb this basis of all existence, or deny the worth and dignity of so unique and beautiful a gift of Providence?

“And yet one may say: even though a man’s property is of great worth, even greater worth must be ascribed to his deeds and achievements. Hence, in the larger perspective, we may consider landholding as a smaller part of the blessings granted to us. Most of these, and the best of them, are actually to be sought in a life of movement and in that which is gained through such an active life.

“It is especially imperative for us younger people to look about us. For if we had the desire, inherited from our fathers, to remain and persist, we would still find ourselves challenged on all sides not to close our eyes to further aspects and prospects. So let us hasten to the edge of the sea and with one glance convince ourselves that immeasurable spaces lie open to action, and let us admit that we are stirred in unexpected fashion by the mere thought of them.

“Still, we do not want to lose ourselves in such boundless distances, but turn our attention to the contiguous broad expanses of so many lands and kingdoms. There we see great stretches of country roamed by nomads whose cities are movable, and whose living, nourishing property, their herds, can be led all about. We see them in the midst of the desert, at large, green oases, like ships at anchor in a safe harbor. Such movement, such wandering, has become a habit with them, a

need; in the end they regard the earth's surface as though it were not dammed by mountains or cut through by rivers. Have we not seen the northeast moving toward the southwest, one people driving another before it, with patterns of authority and land ownership utterly transformed?

"In the course of history the same thing will happen again, starting in the overpopulated regions. What we can expect from strangers would be hard to say. But it is curious that we feel an inner pressure from our own overpopulation, and without waiting to be driven out, we drive ourselves out, and ourselves issue the sentence of banishment against one another.

"Now is the time and place to indulge a certain restlessness in our breasts without annoyance or discontent, and not to suppress the impatient desire that drives us to a change of scene. But let whatever we plan and intend spring not from passion, nor from any other compulsion, but from conviction based on the best reasons.

"It has been said and repeated: 'Where I am well off is my fatherland!' But this comforting saying would be even better formulated if it went, 'Where I am useful is my fatherland!' At home a person can be useless without its being noticed immediately; out in the world, the useless person is at once obvious. If I now say, 'Let each strive to be useful to himself and others in all ways,' it is neither a doctrine nor advice, but the maxim of life itself.

"Now let us survey this planet and leave the ocean aside for the moment, let us not be distracted by the swarms of ships, but fix our eyes on the dry land and wonder at how a teeming race of ants swarms across it. The Lord Himself sanctioned this, when, in disrupting work on the Tower of Babel, He scattered the race of man through all the world. Let us praise Him for this, for this blessing has passed to all mankind.

"Let us now observe with pleasure how natural movement is to youth. Since instruction is available neither at home nor nearby, young people rush off to countries and cities that lure them by their reputation for knowledge and wisdom. Having quickly assimilated some moderate degree of education, they feel impelled to look even farther afield in the wide world, to see whether here or there they may not discover and seize some useful experience that will further their purposes. May they try their luck! We, however, pay homage to those accomplished, excellent men, those noble scientists, who knowingly face all hardships and dangers to open the world to the world, and prepare a path and track through the uncharted wilderness.

"But see how along the smooth highways the dust is stirred up, rising in long clouds, marking the course of comfortable, heavily packed conveyances, in which the high-born, the wealthy, and so many others

roll along, people whose different ways of thought and intentions Yorick has so charmingly analyzed for us.

“Let the sturdy artisan on foot look calmly after them, he on whom his fatherland has imposed the duty to acquire foreign skills and not to return to the family hearth until he has succeeded. More commonly, however, we meet upon our ways traders and dealers. Even a small retailer, from time to time, must not fail to leave his shop to visit fairs and markets, where he can rub shoulders with wholesalers and increase his modest profits by following their example, by taking part in the boundless realm. But the main and side roads are even more thronged with the horde of those riding alone on horseback who have designs on our purses, whether we wish to buy or not. They besiege us both in towns and country houses with samples of every sort and with price lists, and wherever we may try to flee, they busily seek us out, offering bargains which no one would think of looking for on his own. But what shall I say of the race which above all others has adopted the role of the eternal wanderer, and, through constant movement and activity, contrives to outsmart settled shopkeepers and outdo its fellow itinerants? We may speak neither good nor evil of it: not good, because the league is on its guard against them, not evil because the wanderer is obligated to treat everyone he meets in friendly fashion, and be mindful of mutual advantage.

“But above all we must think with sympathy of the artists, for they, too, are implicated in this worldwide movement. Does not the painter journey from portrait to portrait with his easel and palette? And are not his fellow artists also summoned hither and yon, since everywhere there is building and forming to be done? The musician strides along even more briskly, for he it is who serves up new surprises for new ears, fresh sensations for fresh minds. And then the actors, even if they spurn Thespis’ cart, are still always on the move in smaller companies, and their portable world is thrown up quickly enough in every spot. Likewise individual actors like to change from place to place, even sacrificing serious and advantageous connections, the excuse and the impetus being heightened talent and the heightened demand. They usually prepare themselves for this by leaving no significant stage in the fatherland untrodden.

“Next we are admonished to consider the teaching profession: you will find it, too, constantly on the move, appearing on one podium after another to sow the seeds of rapid education profusely on all sides. Even more assiduous and farther reaching, however, are those pious souls who, to bring salvation to all peoples, disperse to every quarter of the globe. Others, on the contrary, make pilgrimages to obtain salvation for themselves; whole troops of them stream to sacred sites of

miracles, where they seek and receive what was not vouchsafed their spirit at home.

"If none of these cause us amazement, since most of their doings would be unthinkable without wandering, we should assume that at least those who devote their effort to the land will be tied to it. Far from it! Cultivation is conceivable even without ownership, and we see a hardworking farmer leave a plot that has yielded him profit and pleasure for many a year while he leased it; avidly he searches for equal or greater advantages, whether far or near. Yes, even the proprietor abandons his newly cleared land as soon as he has made it inviting to a less able owner by his cultivation; he pushes on anew into the wilderness, once again makes a space for himself in the forests as reward for his first efforts, two or three times as large, where he likewise may not intend to remain.

"Let us leave him there, fighting it out with bears and other wild beasts, and return to the civilized world, where we find things no calmer. Consider any large, well-ordered kingdom, where the most competent man must conceive himself as the most flexible. At a nod from the prince, at a directive from the council, the useful person is transferred from one place to the other. To him also our motto applies: 'Make yourself useful everywhere, and you will be at home everywhere.' But when we see important statesmen leaving their high posts, albeit unwillingly, then we have reason to pity them, since they qualify neither as emigrants nor as wanderers. Not emigrants, because they are giving up a desirable situation without any prospect of finding better conditions. Nor are they wanderers, since it is seldom granted to them to be useful in some way in other places.

"The soldier is committed to a special life of wandering. Even in peace he is assigned first to one post, then another. He must always be ready to move near and far to fight for the fatherland, and not only for immediate safety, but also at the will of peoples and rulers he must turn his footsteps to every quarter of the globe, and only to few it is granted to settle anywhere. Since bravery is esteemed as the soldier's highest virtue, and is always linked with loyalty, we often see certain peoples renowned for their reliability summoned from their homeland to serve as bodyguards for secular and spiritual rulers.

"Yet another class, always on the move and indispensable to the state, can be seen in those men of business who, dispatched from court to court, swarm around princes and ministers and form a network of invisible threads over the entire populated world. Of them, too, not a single one is secure in one place for even a moment. In peacetime the most capable of them are sent from one part of the world to the other; in war, they follow the conquering armies, or pave the way for the retreating forces. In either case they are ever prepared to leave one

place for another, for which reason they always carry with them a large supply of farewell cards.

"If up to now we have honored ourselves at every step by claiming the finest of the active people as our fellows and partners in fate, now, dear friends, in conclusion the greatest distinction still awaits you, that of finding yourselves in brotherhood with emperors, kings, and princes. Let us first summon up the blessed memory of that noble imperial wanderer, Hadrian, who on foot, at the head of his army, traversed the entire populated world, all subject to him, and thus first truly took possession of it. Let us recall with a shudder the conquering hordes, those armed wanderers, against whom no resistance availed, and walls and ramparts could not shield harmless peoples. Finally let us accompany with sincere sympathy those unfortunate exiled rulers, who, descending from the pinnacle of power, could never be admitted into even the modest guild of active wanderers.

"Now that we have surveyed all this and clarified it for one another, no small-minded melancholy, no impassioned gloom can hold sway over us. The time is past when people ran off into the world for adventure's sake. Through the efforts of scientific explorers, who have given us thoughtful descriptions and artistic representations, we are well enough informed that we have some idea of what to expect anywhere.

"Yet no individual can achieve complete clarity. Our society, however, is based upon the principle that each should be enlightened according to his capacities and purposes. Should anyone have a land in mind to which he feels drawn, we try to make clear to him in detail what had been but vaguely imagined. Giving one another an overview of the inhabited and habitable world is our pleasantest, most rewarding entertainment.

"In this sense we may view ourselves as involved in a world confederation. The concept is at once grand and simple; with intelligence and vigor it can easily be realized. Unity is all-powerful, therefore there is no dissension, no conflict among us. Insofar as we have principles, they are common to all of us. A man, we say, must learn to think of himself free from lasting external relations. He must seek consistency not in circumstances but within himself; there he will find it, protect it, and cherish it. He will educate and organize himself to be at home anywhere. He who dedicates himself to that which is most essential will achieve his goal with greatest certainty. Others, by contrast, who seek something higher and more refined, must be more cautious even in their choice of direction. But whatever a man may take up and pursue, he cannot manage as a lone individual; society remains a capable man's highest need. All useful men should stand in relation to

one another, as the builder looks to the architect, and the latter to the mason and the carpenter.

“And so you all know how and in what fashion our league was formed and founded. We have no one among us who cannot usefully practice his occupation at any moment, who is not assured that wherever chance, inclination, or even passion might bring him, he will find himself well recommended, received, and encouraged, indeed rescued from misfortunes as far as that is possible.

“We have also taken upon us two strict duties: to honor every form of worship, since they are all more or less expressed in the Creed; in addition, to accept the validity of all forms of government, and, since all of them require and promote useful activity, to work within each according to its will and desire for however long it may be. Finally, we consider it our duty to practice and promote morality without pedantry or prudishness, as, indeed, reverence for ourselves demands, a reverence stemming from the three reverences to which all subscribe, and from the higher wisdom into which all of us have had the good fortune and happiness to be initiated, some of us since our youth. In this solemn hour of parting, let us once more consider all of this, explain it, hear it, and acknowledge it, then also seal it with an affectionate farewell.

Cling not to your homeland's charms,
Take fresh courage, freely roam!
Strong and daring heads and arms
Everywhere can be at home.
Where we gladly greet the sun
Every care is gone at last;
Each a different course may run,
Therefore is the world so vast.”

Chapter Ten

During the final song many of those present rose quickly and filed out of the hall two by two, their voices ringing loudly. Taking a seat, Lenardo asked the guest whether he meant to present his request here in public, or whether he required a special session. The stranger stood up, greeted the company, and began the following recital:

“It is here, in just such a gathering, that I would like to declare myself without further ado. Those who have remained quietly behind, apparently stout men all, have clearly signified by staying that they wish and intend to continue allegiance to their native soil and country. I greet them all warmly, for I must explain that I am in a position to

offer everyone who has so committed himself a good day's work for some years to come. I would like us to assemble again, but only after a short interval, since it is necessary first of all to reveal my undertaking in confidence to these worthy leaders, who have until now held these stout men together, and to convince them of the reliability of my mission. It will then be proper for me to speak individually with those who will remain, to learn with what contributions each would respond to my handsome offer."

At this Lenardo requested a recess, in order to attend to the most pressing business of the moment, and once this was approved, the throng of those remaining behind rose up with decorum and likewise left the hall in pairs, joining their voices in measured song.

Odoard then discovered his intentions and plans to the two leaders who had stayed, and showed them his authorization for the same. But he could not give further account of the matter in discussion with such superior men without considering the human basis on which the entire enterprise rested. As a result, the conversation proceeded to mutual explanations and confessions of profound matters of the heart. Until late in the night they remained together and became ever more entangled in the labyrinth of human dispositions and destinies. In the course of this Odoard was gradually moved to offer fragmentary accounts of the affairs of his heart and mind, for which reason only incomplete and unsatisfying reports of this conversation have been conveyed to us. Yet here again we are indebted to Friedrich's happy talent for seizing and retaining for this evocation of an interesting episode, as well as for some enlightenment on the career of an excellent man, who has begun to interest us, even though these are merely hints of what may later be reported, perhaps more thoroughly and in context.

Not Too Far

It had struck ten in the night, and everything was ready at the appointed hour: in the garlanded parlor a large table was prettily set for four, with elegant dessert and sweetmeats laid out between gleaming candles and flowers. How the children were looking forward to these refreshments, for they were to sit at the table with the adults; in the meantime, they crept about in costumes and masks, and since children cannot be disfigured, they seemed like the most adorable of twin fairies. Their father summoned them, and they recited the dialogue composed for their mother's birthday, with only a little prompting.

Time wore on, and from quarter hour to quarter hour the good old woman did not refrain from increasing our friend's impatience. Several of the lamps on the steps were about to go out, she said, and various

dishes, choice favorites of the mistress, might, she feared, be overcooked. The children became first unruly out of boredom, and finally unbearable out of impatience. Their father pulled himself together, yet his usual composure failed him. He listened longingly for carriages; several rattled by without stopping. A certain annoyance began to stir in him. To pass the time, he made the children recite again; but they, inattentive from weariness, distracted and clumsy, muddled the words, made all the wrong gestures, and exaggerated, like actors who have no feeling. The good man's torment increased with every moment. It was already past ten-thirty. We shall leave it to him to describe what followed:

"The clock struck eleven; my impatience had intensified to despair. I no longer hoped, but feared. I was afraid that she would come in, hastily excuse herself with her usual easy charm, declare that she was very tired, and act as if to accuse me of curtailing her pleasures. Everything went around and around inside me, and many things I had borne in patience for years oppressed my spirit anew. I began to hate her, I could not think how to conduct myself in welcoming her. The dear children, dressed up like little angels, were sleeping peacefully on the sofa. The ground seemed to burn beneath my feet; I could not comprehend, could not understand myself, and had no choice but to flee, if only to survive the next few moments. I rushed, lightly and elegantly dressed as I was, to the door. I do not know what pretext I stammered out to the good old woman. She pressed a cloak upon me, and I found myself in the street, in a state which I had not known for years. Like a youth overcome with passion who has no idea where he is going, I ran up and down the streets. I would have made for the open fields, but a cold, damp wind blew strongly and unpleasantly enough to set limits to my anger."

We have, as this passage strikingly shows, usurped the rights of the epic poet, and plunged the willing reader all too swiftly into the midst of a passionate recital. We see an eminent man in domestic distress, without having learned anything more about him. In order to clarify the situation somewhat, let us join the old servant for a moment, listening in as she murmurs to herself in her trouble and confusion or exclaims out loud:

"I knew it long ago, I foretold it, I did not spare my lady, I warned her often, but it is stronger than she is. If the master wears himself out during the day in the chancellery, in town, or in the country, looking after business, in the evening he finds either an empty house, or company he does not care for. But she cannot stop. If she does not have people around her, men around her, if she does not drive hither and yon, dress and undress and change her clothes, it is as if she could not breathe. Today, on her birthday, she drives off early into the coun-

try. Good! We get everything prepared here in the meanwhile. She promises faithfully to be back home at nine o'clock; we are ready. The master listens to the children recite the nice poem they have memorized; they are all dressed up. Lamps and candles, fricassees and roasts—nothing is missing, but still she does not come. The master has great self-control; he hides his impatience, but it breaks forth. He leaves the house at so late an hour. Why is clear enough, but where to? I have often threatened her with rivals, openly and honestly. Till now I never noticed anything amiss with the master, though one beauty has been lying in wait for him a long time, lavishing attentions on him. Who knows how he has been struggling. Now it is breaking out; this time despair at seeing how his good intentions go unappreciated is driving him from the house in the middle of the night. Now I think that all is lost. I told her more than once that she should not push it too far."

Let us seek out her friend again and hear what he says himself:

"In the best inn I saw a light downstairs, knocked at the window and asked the waiter who looked out whether any strangers had arrived or were expected. Recognizing my voice, he opened the door promptly, but answered no to both my questions, even as he bade me come in. I found it suited my situation to continue with the charade, and requested a room, which he at once made ready on the third floor; the ones on the second, he indicated, would be reserved for the travelers I was expecting. He hurried off to arrange things; I let him go and promised to pay the bill. So far I had survived, but I relapsed into my agony; I recalled each and every detail, exaggerated, then moderated the situation, blamed myself, then tried to compose myself, to calm myself. After all, in the morning a new beginning could be made. I imagined myself going about the day in my accustomed way. But then my anger burst forth again violently; I would never have believed I could be so unhappy."

Our readers have doubtless become sufficiently concerned with this noble man, whom we have unexpectedly discovered so passionately agitated by an apparently trivial incident, that they wish to receive more detailed information about his circumstances. We shall make use of the intermission which now ensues in this night's adventure, while he continues to pace silently and fiercely up and down the room.

We learn that Odoard is a descendant of an old family, to whom the noblest merits were passed down through a succession of generations. Educated at a military academy, he acquired a polished manner which, combined with most admirable intellectual gifts, lent a particular grace to his conduct. A short period of service at court gave him insight into the way affairs are conducted in the highest circles, and when, as a result of quickly won favor, he was attached to an ambassadorial mission and had the opportunity to see the world and acquaint

himself with foreign courts, the clarity of his understanding and his superior memory for events, down to the smallest details, but especially his earnestness in every sort of endeavor, came rapidly to the fore. His facility of expression in several languages, along with his open but not overbearing personality, led him from one rung to another. He achieved success on every diplomatic mission, because he won people's goodwill and thereby gained the advantage of being able to settle misunderstandings, and he was especially adept at satisfying the interests of both sides by fair consideration of all the pertinent arguments.

The prime minister was intent upon making so excellent a man his own; he married his daughter to him, a young lady of the most glowing beauty and skilled in all the higher social virtues. But as the course of all human happiness always encounters some dam that blocks its flow, such was the case here. Princess Sophronie was being raised as a ward of the princely court. She was the last sprig of her family tree, and her property and expectations, even though her lands and tenants were to revert to her uncle, were still considerable. For this reason, in order to avoid prolonged debate, it was deemed desirable to marry her to the crown prince, who, to be sure, was far younger than she.

Odoard was suspected of an inclination for her. It was thought that he had paid her, under the name Aurora, too passionate homage in a poem. This was compounded by a slip on her part, for she had, with her usual strength of character, replied boldly to certain teasing on the part of her companions, saying she would have to have no eyes at all to be blind to such merits.

The suspicion was, to be sure, dispelled by Odoard's marriage, but it was kept alive and occasionally stirred up again by secret enemies.

The question of the succession and the inheritance, although everyone tried to refer to it as little as possible, did sometimes come up. Both the prince and his prudent councillors thought it advisable to let the matter rest, while the secret partisans of the princess wanted it settled, so that the noble lady might enjoy a greater degree of freedom, especially since the elderly neighboring king, a relative of Sophronie's and well disposed toward her, was still alive and had at times shown himself ready to exert a paternal influence on her behalf.

Odoard came under suspicion of having tried, on a purely ceremonial mission to that court, to further the business that others were trying to retard. His adversaries made use of this incident, and his father-in-law, whom he had convinced of his innocence, had to exert all his influence to procure him a sort of governorship in a remote province. He was happy there; he could set all his talents to work; there were necessary, useful, good, fine, and great tasks to be done; he could achieve lasting effects without sacrificing himself, instead of de-

stroying himself, as people sometimes do, by involvement, against his own principles, with affairs of no consequence.

His wife felt differently about it, for she felt truly alive only in wider circles, and followed him only after an interval, and under duress. He conducted himself toward her with the utmost consideration, and encouraged every surrogate for her erstwhile happiness: in the summer, outings in the surrounding countryside, in winter, amateur theatricals, balls, and whatever else she chose to initiate. He even tolerated a "friend of the family," a stranger who some time earlier had insinuated himself, although Odoard by no means liked the man, since with his keen eye for character he was convinced he perceived a certain falseness in him.

All that we have recounted may have passed through his mind in the present critical moment, some of it darkly and hazily, some of it clearly and distinctly. Suffice it to say that when we turn to him again, after these intimate revelations, whose substance was provided by Friedrich's excellent memory, we find him again pacing fiercely up and down the room, his gestures and exclamations expressing an inner struggle.

"With such thoughts I paced fiercely up and down the room. The waiter had brought me a cup of bouillon, which I badly needed, since in my careful preparations for the party I had not eaten, and a delicious supper waited untouched at home. At that moment I heard the pleasant sound of a post horn coming up the street. 'That one is from the mountains,' the waiter said. We ran to the window and saw by the light of two bright carriage lanterns an elegant, well-packed carriage drawn by four horses. The servants sprang down from the box. 'Here they are,' the waiter cried, and hurried to the door. I stopped him to impress upon him that he must not say I was there, must not reveal that orders had been given; he promised, and rushed off.

"In the meantime I had failed to see who had arrived, and a new impatience seized me: the waiter seemed to be taking much too long to bring me news. Finally I learned from him that the guests were ladies, an older woman of distinguished appearance, a younger one of incredible charm, and a chambermaid after everyone's heart. 'She started out,' the waiter told me, 'with orders, continued with flattery, and, when I flirted with her, assumed a merry, saucy manner, which in all probability was the most natural to her.' "

"I quickly noticed," he continues, "that they were astonished at finding me so alert and the house so ready to receive them, the rooms lit, the fires burning. They made themselves comfortable; a cold supper was waiting for them in the dining room; I offered bouillon, which seemed welcome."

Now the ladies were seated at table. The older one hardly ate, the beautiful, attractive one not at all. The chambermaid, whom they called Lucie, ate with gusto and praised the inn, admiring the bright candles, the fine table linen, the porcelain, and all the accoutrements. She had earlier warmed herself at the blazing fire, and now asked the waiter, when he returned, whether they were always so well prepared to serve guests who arrived unexpectedly at any hour of the day or night. The nimble young fellow reacted in this case as children do, who may well keep a secret but cannot conceal that some secret has been entrusted to them. At first he answered ambiguously, then came closer to the truth, and finally, driven into a corner by the chambermaid's spirit and repartee, confessed that a servant, a gentleman had come, had gone away, had returned, but finally he let slip that the gentleman was indeed upstairs, and was restlessly pacing back and forth. The young lady jumped up, and the others did the same. "It must be an elderly gentleman," they exclaimed. The waiter assured them that on the contrary, he was young. Now they doubted him again, but he swore to the truth of his assertion. Their confusion and uneasiness increased. "It must be my uncle," the beautiful woman maintained. "But this is not like him," the older woman countered. No one but he could have known that they would arrive here at this hour, the young woman insisted. The waiter, however, swore again and again that the person in question was a young man, handsome and vigorous. Lucie swore it must be the uncle; they should not believe the waiter; the rogue had already been contradicting himself for the past half hour.

After all this the waiter had to go up and urgently request the gentleman to come down quickly, under the threat of the ladies' coming to thank him themselves. "It's the very devil of a mess," the waiter continued. "I don't understand why you hesitate to let yourself be seen. They think you are an old uncle, whom they passionately long to embrace. I beg you, go down. Are these not the people you were expecting? Do not rashly shun such a delightful adventure; the young beauty is well worth seeing and hearing, they are thoroughly respectable people. Hurry downstairs, or they will march in on you in your chamber."

Passion begets passion. Agitated as he was, he longed for something different, unfamiliar. He descended, hoping that, in pleasant conversation with the newcomers, he might explain himself, clarify his own state of mind, learn of others' circumstances, distract himself; and yet he felt as if he were about to encounter a familiar, ominous situation. Now he stood before the door. The ladies, believing they heard the uncle's footsteps, ran to meet him. He entered the room. What an encounter! What a scene! The beautiful woman gave a cry and buried her face in the older woman's shoulder. Our friend recognized them

both, started back, then was driven forward—he was at her feet, touching her hand, which he quickly let go again, with the most modest of kisses. The syllables “Au-ro-ra” died on his lips.

If we now turn our gaze to our friend’s home, we shall find most unusual circumstances. The good old woman was at her wits’ end. She kept the lamps burning in the vestibule and on the steps. She had removed the food from the fire, some of it hopelessly ruined. The chambermaid had remained with the sleeping children and watched over the many candles, her movements about the room as quiet and patient as the other’s had been disgruntled.

Finally the carriage rolled up, the lady descended and heard that her husband had been called away a few hours earlier. As she mounted the stairs, she seemed to take no notice of the festive illumination. The old woman now learned from the manservant that an accident had occurred on the way: the carriage had fallen into a ditch, with all the attendant circumstances.

The lady came into the room. “What sort of masquerade is this?” she asked, pointing to the children. “You would have greatly enjoyed it,” the maid replied, “had you returned a few hours earlier.” The children, shaken out of their slumber, jumped up, and seeing their mother before them, began their memorized speech. It proceeded for a while, with embarrassment on both sides, but then, in the absence of encouragement or prompting, it faltered, then came to a complete halt, and the dear children were sent off to bed with a few caresses. The lady, now alone, threw herself down on the sofa and burst into bitter tears.

However, it now becomes necessary to offer more information about the lady herself and about the rural festivity which had apparently taken an unfortunate turn. Albertine was one of those women to whom one finds nothing to say in private, but who is well liked in larger gatherings. There they appear as true ornaments to society and enliven any dull moment. Their charm is of the sort that needs a certain space in which to manifest itself and operate comfortably; to achieve an effect they require a large audience. They must be surrounded by an element which buoys them up, which obliges them to be charming. They hardly know how to behave toward one person alone.

The friend of the family had won and retained her favor simply because he was skilled at introducing one activity after another, and could always keep in constant motion a circle, which if not large, was at least merry. When parts were being assigned, he always chose the role of tender father, and with his respectable and solemn bearing managed to outshine the younger first, second, and third admirers.

Florine, who owned a major estate in the neighborhood and wintered in town, was indebted to Odoard, because his economic planning had,

fortuitously but fortunately, greatly benefited her lands, which promised to increase their yield considerably in the future. She spent summers on her estate, and made it the scene of all sorts of respectable amusements. Birthdays in particular were never overlooked, and parties of all sorts were held.

Florine was a lively, playful creature, seemingly fancy-free and neither welcoming nor desiring any special attachment. A passionate dancer, she valued men only to the extent that they could move in time to the music. Always a lively conversationalist, she could not abide anyone who stared into space for even a moment and seemed to reflect. She also played most charmingly the merry soubrette, needed for every play or opera, for which reason no rivalry arose between herself and Albertine, who always took the virtuous parts.

To assure that the impending birthday was celebrated in good company, the best people from the city and the countryside had been invited. The dancing commenced immediately after breakfast, continued after dinner; it went on too long, they set out late, and were overtaken by darkness before they realized it, on bad roads, doubly treacherous for being under repair; the coachman lost control, and the carriage fell into the ditch. Our beauty, along with Florine and the friend of the family, were all tangled up together. The friend extricated himself quickly; then, bending over the carriage, called, "Florine, where are you, my dear one?" Albertine thought she was dreaming. He reached inside and pulled out Florine, who was lying on top in a faint, tried to revive her, and finally bore her in his strong arms along the proper road. Albertine was still trapped in the carriage; the coachman and the servant helped her out, and supported by them, she tried to proceed. The going was rough, not meant for dancing slippers; although the lad helped her along, she stumbled repeatedly. But within her all seemed even wilder, even more desolate. She did not know, could not grasp what had happened to her.

But when she reached the inn, and saw Florine on the bed in the small room, the landlady and Lelio looking after her, she was certain of her misfortune. A secret relationship between her unfaithful companion and her treacherous friend was revealed in a flash when Florine, opening her eyes, threw her arms about Lelio, with the rapture of newly revived, tenderest possessiveness. She saw how her black eyes shone again, and a fresh bloom suddenly tinged her pale cheeks; she really appeared rejuvenated, charming, most lovely.

Albertine stood staring, alone, hardly noticed. The other two recovered, pulled themselves together, but the damage had already been done. And now they had to seat themselves once more in the carriage, and in Hell itself souls so hostile to one another could scarcely be more tightly packed in together, the betrayers with the betrayed.

Chapter Eleven

For some days both Lenardo and Odoard were extremely busy, the one providing the emigrants with all they needed, the other becoming acquainted with those staying behind, assessing their skills, and informing them adequately of his aims. In the meanwhile, there was time enough for Friedrich and our friend to talk in peace. Wilhelm had the general plan outlined for him, and once the landscape and region had become sufficiently familiar to him, and the hope had been discussed that a large number of inhabitants could be quickly settled in an extensive area, the talk finally turned, as was natural, to what actually binds men together: to religion and morality. On these matters merry Friedrich could give sufficient information, and we would doubtless earn thanks if we could communicate the discussion in its entirety, as it twisted its way in exemplary fashion by way of questions and answers, objections and corrections, often wavering this way and that, as it moved toward its actual goal. However, we may not take so much time, and will rather present the conclusions at once than commit ourselves to letting these principles gradually evolve in our readers' minds. The following represents the quintessence of what was discussed:

That man must accommodate himself to the inevitable, all religions insist on; each tries in its own way to come to terms with this task.

The Christian religion offers gentle assistance in the form of faith, hope, and charity. From these springs patience, a sweet feeling that existence remains a priceless gift, even when, instead of the desired enjoyment, it is burdened with the most hideous suffering. We adhere firmly to this religion, but in a peculiar way; we teach our children from youth on about the great benefits it has brought us; only much later, however, do we acquaint them with its origin and history. Only then do we come to love and value its founder, and any accounts that refer to Him become sacred. In this sense, which might perhaps be called pedantic, but whose consistency must be acknowledged, we tolerate no Jews among us. How can we grant them participation in the highest culture when they repudiate its origin and source?

Our moral teachings are entirely separate from all this; they are purely pragmatic and can be summed up in these few rules: moderation where there is choice, industry where there is necessity. Let everyone put these laconic words to use in his life in his own way, and he will have a rich text with limitless applications.

The greatest respect is instilled in everyone for time as the highest gift of God and Nature, and the most attentive companion of our existence. We have a multiplicity of clocks among us, which all mark

the quarter hours with both hands and chimes. To multiply these signs as much as possible, the telegraphs set up in our country, when they are not being used otherwise, indicate the course of the hours both by day and by night, and do so by means of a very ingenious mechanism.

Our moral system, which is thus entirely practical, mainly enjoins circumspection, and this is greatly furthered by the organization of time, by attentiveness to every hour. Every moment must be well employed, and how could that happen if one did not attend to the task as well as to the hour?

In view of the fact that we are just beginning, we lay great stress on family circles. We plan to assign heavy obligations to fathers and mothers. The matter of rearing becomes easier the more each must be answerable for his or her own self, the farmhand and the maid, the male and female servants.

Certain things, to be sure, must be taught with a certain uniformity. The Abbé is taking over the task of teaching the multitude to read, to write, and to figure with ease. His method is reminiscent of alternating instruction, yet it is more ingenious. But actually everything depends on educating teacher and student at the same time.

But there is yet another form of mutual instruction I want to mention: practice in attacking and defending. Here Lothario is in his element; his maneuvers somewhat resemble those of our sharpshooters, but he cannot help being original.

In this connection I might remark that in our civilian life we have no bells, in our military no drums. There as here, the human voice, combined with wind instruments, is sufficient. All that has existed before and still does; the proper application of it, however, is entrusted to that mind which would probably have invented it in any case.

The greatest need of any state is courageous leadership, and ours shall not be deficient in this. We are all impatient to commence the enterprise, ready and convinced that one must simply begin. Therefore we concern ourselves not with justice but rather with police powers. The principle will be enunciated firmly: no one shall inconvenience the others. Anyone who proves a nuisance shall be removed until he understands how to behave so as to be tolerated. If there is anything counter to life or good sense involved, this, likewise, will be removed.

Every district has three police directors, who relieve each other in eight-hour shifts, as in mining operations, which likewise cannot stop; and one of our men must always be on hand, particularly during the night.

They are empowered to issue warnings, to censure, to reprimand, and to remove offenders. Should they find it necessary, they summon a larger or smaller number of jurymen. If the vote is tied, the decision is not left to the foreman, but lots are drawn, since we are persuaded

that when opinions are equally divided, it does not matter which wins out.

As for majority rule, we have our own special views on that; we allow it to prevail, of course, in the necessary course of things, but in the higher sense we place little trust in it. On that question, however, I may not expatiate further.

If anyone inquires about the higher authority that directs everything, it is never to be found in one spot. It constantly moves about, in order to maintain uniformity in the most important matters, and to let everyone have his own will in less crucial ones. This practice has its precedent in history: German emperors traveled about, and this arrangement best accords with the spirit of free states. We are afraid of a capital city, even though we can already see the spot in our lands where the greatest number of people will congregate. But we keep this a secret, for it will develop gradually and soon enough in any case.

These are, in the most general terms, the points on which we are largely agreed, but whenever several, or even a few, of our members come together, these matters are always discussed anew. The chief thing, however, will be when we are actually there. The new conditions, which are meant to be lasting, will actually be determined by the law. Our penalties are mild: the right to issue warnings is open to every citizen of a certain age; only the acknowledged eldest may disapprove and reprimand; only a duly summoned jury may impose punishment.

It has been observed that severe laws very soon lose their force and gradually become more lenient, because Nature always asserts her rights. We have lenient laws, so that we can gradually become more severe. Our punishments consist initially in banishment from civil society—milder or more definitive, shorter or longer, according to the findings. Should the citizens' property gradually increase, then part of it will be pinched off, less or more, depending on how they deserve to suffer in this department.

All the members of the bond are instructed in these laws, and our examinations have shown that each person applies the main points to himself as is most suitable. The abiding principle is that we take the advantages of civilization with us, and leave its evils behind. Taverns and circulating libraries will not be tolerated among us; our attitude toward bottles and books I would rather not discuss; such things must be judged in practice.

In the same spirit the collector and arranger of these papers forbears to mention other dispositions which are still circulating as problems in the society, and which it will perhaps not be advisable to try out on the spot. The author might expect that much less applause, were he to dwell on them here.

Chapter Twelve

The time appointed for Odoardo to address the company had arrived, and when all had assembled and quieted down, he began to speak as follows: "The significant undertaking in which I have invited this throng of stalwart men to participate is not altogether unknown to you, for I have already discussed it with you in general terms. As my disclosures imply, there are in the old world, as in the new, areas which need better cultivation than they have previously received. Over there Nature has spread vast, wide spaces that lie untouched and wild, so that one hardly dares venture into them and engage them in battle. And yet it is easy for resolute men gradually to conquer this wilderness and assure themselves of partial possession. In the old world the opposite is true. Here every piece of land is already partially possessed, and the rights to it sanctified more or less from time immemorial. And if over there boundlessness seems an insuperable obstacle, here the many boundaries present obstacles even more difficult to overcome. Nature can be subdued through industry; men must be subdued through force or persuasion.

"If private property is held sacred by society as a whole, it is even more sacred to the owner of such property. Habit, youthful impressions, respect for one's forefathers, dislike of one's neighbor, and hundreds of other things are what make the landowners rigid and opposed to any alteration. The longer such conditions have prevailed, the more interlaced and fragmented the holdings, the harder it becomes to carry out any common venture, which, by taking something away from the individual, would bring to the whole and to each member unanticipated benefits through the effects of cooperation.

"For several years now I have governed a province in the name of my prince—a province which, separated from the rest of his lands, was for a long time not used as it might be. This very isolation or insularity, if you will, has prevented the development of any institution which might have allowed the inhabitants to disseminate what they can to the outside world and receive from the outside world what they need.

"I had unlimited authority to rule in this province. Much good could be done, but always within limits. Everywhere there were bars to improvement, and what was most desirable seemed to exist in an entirely different world.

"I had no other duty than to administer the province well. What could be easier! It is equally easy to eliminate abuses, to put human capabilities to work, to aid the ambitious. All this was readily accomplished with good sense and power; in a way it took care of itself. But what especially aroused my attention and my concern were the neigh-

bors, who did not govern, or have their domains governed, in a similar spirit, let alone with similar convictions.

"I had almost resigned myself to the situation, making the best of it and relying on tradition to the extent possible, but I suddenly noticed that the spirit of the times was coming to my assistance. Younger administrators took office in the neighboring lands; they cherished similar ideas, though to be sure only in a general sense of benevolence, and gradually came to subscribe to my plans for cooperation on all sides, the more readily because it was my lot to concede the greater sacrifices without anyone's noticing that the greater benefit also accrued to my side.

"So now the three of us are authorized to rule over sizeable stretches of land, and our princes and ministers are persuaded that our suggestions are trustworthy and useful; for beyond a doubt it takes more to recognize one's advantage on a large scale than on a small one. Here necessity always shows us what we must do or not do, and this standard is sufficient if we apply it to present conditions. But there we are to create a future, and even if some keen intellect invented a plan for it, how can he hope that others will assent to it?

"As yet no individual could succeed at this. These times, which are liberating men's minds, are also opening their eyes to distant prospects, and in the larger perspective higher ideals are more easily recognized, and one of the worst obstacles to human action will be easier to eliminate. The problem lies in the fact that while people may often agree on goals, they agree much less on the means to attain them. For any truly great ideal raises us above ourselves and lights us on our way like a star. But when it comes to choosing the means, we are recalled to ourselves, and then the individual reverts to exactly what he was before, and feels just as isolated as if he had not previously joined in the whole.

"At this point we must reiterate: the times must come to our aid. The times must take the place of reason, and within our expanded hearts nobler motives must supplant baser ones.

"Let this suffice, and if for the moment it is too much, I shall remind every participant of it as we go on. Accurate surveys have been made, the roads charted, the points determined where inns are to be located, and eventually perhaps villages. There is an opportunity, indeed, a necessity, for every kind of building. Excellent architects and technicians are preparing everything. Plans and estimates are ready. The intention is to sign larger and smaller contracts, so that the available funds will be expended under close supervision, to the astonishment of the mother country. We live in the splendid hope of seeing unified activity develop in all directions from now on.

“However, what I must now call to the attention of all participants, since it might have some influence on their decision, is the arrangement, the form under which we mean to unite all our members and create for them a worthy position amongst themselves and toward the rest of the civilized world.

“As soon as we set foot in those designated lands, the crafts will immediately be declared arts, to be set apart and distinguished from the ‘free’ arts by the term ‘rigorous.’ For the moment we can consider only those occupations whose business is building; all of the men assembled here, young and old, belong to this group.

“Let us take these crafts in the order in which they erect a building and gradually prepare it for occupancy.

“First I name the stonecutters, who square off the foundation and cornerstones which, with the help of the mason, they will sink at the right spot, with perfect alignment. Next come the masons, who firmly attach the present and the future parts to this rigorously tested base. Sooner or later the carpenter comes by with the framing he has assembled, and thus the planned structure rises higher and higher. We hurriedly call in the roofer; on the inside we need joiners, glaziers, locksmiths, and if I name the painter last, that is because he can come in to do his work at all sorts of times, and in the end gives a pleasing finish to the entire structure, inside and out. I do not mention the various subsidiary crafts, but focus only on the principal ones.

“The stages of apprentice, journeyman, and master must be adhered to as strictly as possible; many gradations can be recognized within these, but the tests cannot be administered carefully enough. Anyone who enters knows that he is dedicating himself to a rigorous art, and must not expect lenient demands. A single link that breaks in a great chain destroys the whole thing. In great undertakings as in great dangers, frivolity must be banished.

“Precisely in this respect the rigorous arts must set an example for the free arts, and seek to put them to shame. If we examine the so-called free arts, which are to be understood and so named in a higher sense, it turns out to make no difference whether they are practiced well or badly. The worst statue stands on its feet with the best, a painted figure with misdrawn feet still strides forward briskly, while its misshapen arms reach out stoutly enough; figures may not be standing in correct perspective, yet the ground does not cave in on this account. With music it is even more striking; the screeching fiddle at the village tavern stirs stout limbs most powerfully, and we have seen believers edified by the most abominable church music. And if you wish to count poetry among the free arts, you will surely see that it, too, hardly knows its limits. And yet every art has its internal laws, though flouting them brings no harm to mankind; the rigorous arts, by contrast, can

allow themselves no such liberties. The free artist may be praised, and one can derive pleasure from his merits, even if, upon closer scrutiny, his work does not pass muster.

"But if we consider both, the free as well as rigorous arts, at their best, the latter must be on their guard against pedantry and flatfootedness, the former against thoughtlessness and botched work. Those who guide them will point out these dangers, thus preventing abuses and carelessness.

"I shall not recapitulate, for our whole life will be a recapitulation of what I have already said. I note only the following: he who devotes himself to one of the rigorous arts must be faithful to it for life. Previously they were called handicrafts, quite suitably and correctly. Their practitioners are supposed to work with their hands, and the hand that performs such work must be animated by a life of its own, must be a being unto itself, with its own thoughts, its own will; and that cannot be spread over many skills."

After the speaker had concluded with a few more well-chosen words, all present rose, and instead of leaving, the crafts formed an orderly circle before the table of their acknowledged leaders. Odoard handed each of them a printed sheet, from which they sang, with measured cheerfulness, a trusting song set to a familiar melody:

Let staying, going, far or near,
Be one henceforth to him who strives.
And where a useful course we steer,
Then there's the place to build our lives.
To follow you is like child's play:
Obedience will show the way
To find a trusty fatherland.
All hail the leader! Hail the bond!

Our strength and burdens you distribute
And measure justly for each life;
You give the old ones peace and tribute
While youths are granted work and wife.
With mutual trust we live at one,
All building houses neat and snug,
Since each is closed by fence of wood,
No mistrust mars the neighborhood.

Along the smooth and well-paved ways
In taverns new the traveler rests,
The stranger there for all his days
Good land in ample portion gets.

There let us settle, join with others,
Let's hurry, hurry to our brothers,
To the trusty fatherland.
All hail the leader, hail the bond!

Chapter Thirteen

Perfect stillness followed the lively activity of the previous days. The three friends stayed on alone, and it was soon noticeable that two of them, Lenardo and Friedrich, were moved by an odd restlessness; they did not conceal their impatience at being prevented from taking part in the departure from this place. It seemed that they were waiting for some messenger, and in the interval nothing sensible, nothing decisive was said.

At last the messenger arrives, bringing an important packet, upon which Friedrich instantly throws himself, in order to open it. Lenardo stops him, saying, "Leave it be. Place it on the table before us. Let us look at it, think, and conjecture what it may contain. For our fate is closer to being decided, and if we are not ourselves masters of it, if it depends on the thinking or feelings of others, a yes or a no, a this way or that way is to be expected from outside, then it behooves us to be calm, to compose ourselves, to ask ourselves whether we would submit to it as if it were a so-called divine judgment imposed upon us to take our reason prisoner."

"You are not as calm as you wish to appear," Friedrich answered, "so stay alone with your secrets and deal with them as you please; in any case, they mean nothing to me. But let me in the meantime reveal the contents to this old and proven friend and present him with the dubious circumstances we have so long kept secret from him." With these words he whisked our friend off and was already on his way when he exclaimed, "She has been found, found long since! Now the only question is what is to become of her."

"I already knew that," Wilhelm replied, "for friends reveal most clearly the very things they do not say to one another. The last entry in the journal, where Lenardo deep in the mountains remembers my letter to him, called up before my mind's eye the entire spiritual and emotional sphere of that good creature. I could see him approach her the very next morning, recognize her, and whatever might follow from that. But I will say frankly that I was disquieted by your silence and reserve, not because I was curious, but because I had taken a genuine interest in her well-being."

"And in this respect," exclaimed Friedrich, "you are particularly affected by this packet that has arrived. The continuation of the journal

was sent to Makarie, and we did not want to spoil the episode for you, in all its solemnity and charm, by telling it. But you shall have it right away. Lenardo has surely unpacked it by now and he does not need it himself."

With this Friedrich bounded off in his old way, bounded back, and brought the promised notebook. "But now I, too, must find out," he cried, "what will become of us." With that he was gone again, and Wilhelm read:

Lenardo's Diary (Continuation)

Friday the 19th

Since we could not delay if we wanted to reach Dame Susanna's in good time, we took a quick breakfast with the entire family, thanked them with discreet congratulations, and left behind with the Harness-Fixer, who was staying, the presents intended for the girls, somewhat richer and more bridal than those of the day before yesterday; we slipped them to him secretly, and the good man showed himself greatly pleased.

This time the road was put behind us early; after some hours we were looking down into a peaceful, not very wide, level valley, whose one rocky side was gently lapped and mirrored by the waters of a clear lake. There we saw solid, handsome houses, around which a more fertile soil, carefully tended, made some gardening possible in the sunny locations. Introduced to the main house by the Yarn Man and presented to Dame Susanna, I felt most strange when she addressed us kindly and assured us that she was very pleased that we had come on a Friday, the quietest day of the week; on Thursday evenings the finished goods were taken to the lake and from there to town. To the Yarn Man, who interjected, "I suppose Daniel always brings them down?" she replied, "Certainly; he manages the business as conscientiously and faithfully as if it were his own." "Indeed, there is not much difference," remarked the other. He received several commissions from the friendly hostess and hurried off to accomplish his business in the side valleys, promising to return in a few days and fetch me.

Meanwhile I was feeling most peculiar. Immediately upon entering, I had been overcome by a premonition that this was the long sought woman. When I looked at her closely, it was not she, and could not be, and yet when I looked away, or when she turned around, it was again, just as in a dream, memory and imagination vie with one another.

Several spinners who had fallen behind in their week's work brought it in; the mistress, with friendly admonitions to be industrious, bargained with them, but then, in order to converse with the guest, left the task to two girls, whom she called Gretchen and Lieschen. I observed them the more carefully as I wanted to see whether they corresponded to the description given by the Harness-Fixer. These two figures quite befuddled me and destroyed any resemblance between the woman I was seeking and the woman of the house.

But I observed the latter even more attentively, and she seemed to me the being most worthy and appealing of all I had beheld on my journey through the mountains. By now I knew enough about weaving to be able to speak knowledgeably with her about the business, which she understood well. My informed interest pleased her greatly, and when I asked where she procured her cotton—which I had seen being transported in bulk over the high mountains a few days earlier—she replied that this very shipment had brought her a substantial supply. The location of her village was very fortunate in this respect as well, for the highway leading down to the lake passed only fifteen minutes below her valley, so that she could receive either personally or through an agent the bales dispatched to her from Trieste, as had indeed occurred the day before yesterday.

She then led her new friend into a large, airy cellar, where her cotton supply was stored so that it should not dry out too much, and lose weight and pliability. I found assembled here all that I had already encountered separately; bit by bit she pointed out various things, and I took an intelligent interest in them. After a time she spoke less, and I could tell from her questions that she assumed I belonged to the trade. For she said that since the cotton had just arrived, she was expecting a clerk or a partner from the firm in Trieste, who, after discreetly looking over her situation, would collect the money due him; this lay ready for anyone who could show proper identification.

Somewhat embarrassed, I became evasive and watched her as she went through the room to give instructions; she seemed like Penelope among her handmaidens.

She returns, and I have the impression that she is troubled. "Then you are not a merchant?" she said. "I do not know why I should feel such trust, and why I venture to ask the same of you. I have no wish to compel you, but grant me to know what lies in your heart." With this, the face of a stranger with such familiar, penetrating eyes gazed at me, so that I felt myself pierced through, and could scarcely maintain my composure. My knees, my mind, were about to fail me when fortunately she was suddenly called away. I managed to recover, to strengthen my resolve of keeping my counsel as long as possible. For I had the feeling that another ill-fated relationship threatened me.

Gretchen, a calm, friendly girl, led me off to show me the elaborate forms of weaving. She did so with quiet intelligence, while I took notes to demonstrate my attentiveness; they are still in my notebook as testimony to a purely mechanical process, for I had something entirely different on my mind. They read as follows:

"The woof of treadled, as well as of hand-shuttled, woven fabric is composed, depending on what the pattern requires, of white, loosely twisted thread, the so-called fly yarn, occasionally also of yarns dyed Turkish red or blue, which are likewise used for stripes or flowers.

"When 'shearing' the fabric, they wind it on rollers that form a rectangular frame, around which several workers sit."

Lieschen, who was sitting among the shearers, stands up, joins us, and interrupts officiously, in such a way as to confuse the other girl with contradictions. And when, despite that, I paid closer attention to Gretchen, Lieschen began bustling about, fetching this and bringing that, and without being compelled to by the narrowness of the space, twice brushed me meaningfully with her soft elbow as she swept by, which did not especially please me.

The virtuous beauty (she deserves to be called this in any case, but particularly in comparison with the others) came to lead me into the garden, where we were to enjoy the evening sun before it hid behind the mountain peaks. A smile played about her lips, as it often will when a person is hesitating to say something agreeable. In me, too, this embarrassment produced an exquisite feeling. We walked side by side; I did not dare to take her hand, much as I would have liked to; both of us seemed fearful of words or signs by which the happy discovery might all too soon be revealed to be something vulgar. She pointed out some flower pots in which I recognized seedlings of cotton plants: "Thus do we tend and nourish the seeds, which are useless for our business, even bothersome, but have made such a long journey to us with the cotton. It is an act of gratitude, and there is a special satisfaction in seeing alive something whose dead remains quicken our existence. Here you see the beginning; you are already acquainted with the middle; and this evening, if fortune is kind, you shall see a happy conclusion.

"We manufacturers in person, or through an agent, bring the week's accumulation of goods to the market boat on Thursday evening, and, in the company of others on the same errand, reach town very early on Friday morning. Here each one takes his goods to the wholesale merchants and tries to dispose of them for the best possible price, occasionally even taking the necessary supply of raw cotton in place of payment.

"But our people do not bring only supplies of raw materials for production and cash earnings back from town; they also furnish them-

selves there with all sorts of other necessities or luxuries. When someone from the family has gone off to market in town, they leave behind them expectations, hopes, and wishes, and often even anxiety and fear. Storms and showers may arise, and people worry that the boat may come to grief. The avaricious wait around, eager to hear how the sale of wares came out, and calculate in advance the amount of pure profit. The inquisitive wait for the latest gossip from town, the lovers of finery for the clothing or fashionable fripperies that the traveler was commissioned to bring back, the lovers of food and especially the children for the comestibles, be they only white rolls.

"The departure from town is usually delayed almost until evening; then the lake gradually comes alive, and boats glide over its surface, sailing or propelled by the strength of oars; each strives to get ahead of the others, and those who succeed jokingly mock those condemned to lag behind.

"That trip on the lake is a delightful, beautiful spectacle, when the water mirrors the surrounding mountains, turns rosy with them in the sunset, then gradually settles deeper and deeper into shadow; the stars come out, the vesper bells sound, and lights appear in the villages by the shore, to be reflected in the water, and then the moon rises, and casts its shimmer over the barely rippled surface. The fertile terrain flies past; village after village, farmstead after farmstead is left behind, and when finally you near home, a horn is sounded, and at once you see lights twinkling here and there on the mountain, moving down toward the shore; every house that has a family member aboard sends someone to help with the bundles.

"We live farther up, but each of us has made this trip often enough, and we are all equally involved in anything connected with the business."

I had listened, amazed at the goodness and beauty with which she spoke, and could not withhold the frank observation: how could she have attained such cultivation in this rude part of the world, in such a mechanical trade? She replied, looking straight ahead with a charming, almost roguish smile, "I was born in a more beautiful, gentler land, governed and inhabited by superior people. Although as a child I showed myself headstrong and wild, still the influence of gifted land-owners on their surroundings was unmistakable. The greatest influence on a young being, however, came from a religious upbringing which developed in me a certain sense of what was right and proper, of being nurtured by the omnipresence of divine love. We emigrated"—the delicate smile departed from her lips, she blinked back a tear—"and we wandered, far, far, from one land to another, following hints and recommendations from godly people. Finally we arrived here, in this hardworking place. The house in which you find me was the home of

fellow believers; they kindly took us in; my father spoke the same language, was of the same mind, and before long we seemed part of the family.

"I joined industriously in all the housework and handiwork, and whatever you now see me presiding over I learned, practiced, and mastered step by step. The son of the family, a few years older than I, a well-built, handsome boy, came to love me and made me his confidante. By nature he was industrious, but also sensitive. The piety practiced in the house did not appeal to him, did not satisfy him; in secret he read books that he managed to obtain in town, the sort of books which guide the mind in a freer, more universal direction. Since he perceived a similar urge, a similar disposition in me, he endeavored to share with me little by little that which so absorbed him. Finally, since I entered into everything, he no longer hesitated to reveal his entire secret to me. We were truly a very odd pair, whose conversation on our solitary walks was only of the principles that make a person independent, and whose genuine affection seemed based only on mutually reinforcing ideas whose effect otherwise is to estrange people from one another completely."

Although I did not look at her directly, but only glanced up from time to time, as if by chance, I nevertheless observed with wonder and sympathy that her features faithfully expressed the meaning of her words. After a momentary silence her face brightened. "I must," she said, "answer your original question with a confession, that you may better understand my eloquence, which may sometimes seem not entirely natural.

"Unfortunately we both had to dissemble before the others, and although we were very careful not to lie and be false in the crude sense, yet in a subtler sense we were, in that we could never find excuses to absent ourselves from the well-attended meetings of the Brethren. Since we had to listen there to much that went against our convictions, he soon taught me to understand and perceive that not everything came straight from the heart, but that much of it was sheer verbiage: images, metaphors, conventional turns of phrase and oft-repeated lines, forever revolving around a single axis. I now paid closer attention and made the language so much my own that eventually I could have delivered a homily as well as any of the leaders. At first the good youth found this amusing, but finally too much of it made him impatient, so that, to pacify him, I took the opposite course, listened to him all the more carefully, and could repeat to him even a week later his own heartfelt, honest discourse, with at least comparable freedom and a not dissimilar spirit.

"And so our relationship grew into an intimate bond; a passion for something true and good, and a longing to put these ideals into practice were what actually united us.

"As I now consider what might have caused you to start me off on such a tale, it was my vivid description of a successfully concluded market day. Do not be surprised at that; it was precisely cheerful, heartwarming contemplation of beautiful and sublime scenes from Nature that occupied me and my betrothed most in quiet hours of leisure. Fine native poets had awakened and nurtured this feeling in us: Haller's 'Alps,' Gessner's 'Idylls,' Kleist's 'Springtime' were often recited, and we regarded the glorious world around us sometimes as picturesque, sometimes as sublime.

"I still recall with pleasure how we two, keen-eyed and farsighted, would vie with one another in trying to point out quickly the significant phenomena of the earth and the sky, seeking to outpace and surpass one another. This was the finest relaxation, not only from our daily work, but also from those serious discussions which often plunged us only too deeply into ourselves and threatened our peace of mind.

"At this time a traveler came among us, probably under an assumed name. We do not pry further, since he immediately wins our confidence by his ways, since he conducts himself with complete uprightness, and is also properly attentive in our assemblies. Guided by my friend through the mountains, he proves himself serious, intelligent, and knowledgeable. I, too, join in their discussions of moral questions, in which everything of import to the inner man is eventually addressed; here he quickly detects a certain vacillation in our attitudes toward divine questions. Religious expressions had become trivial to us; the kernel they were supposed to contain had been lost. He made us aware of our perilous state, of how serious it was to be estranged from the tradition to which so much had been connected from childhood on; it was particularly dangerous given the incompleteness of our own inner nature. To be sure, piety practiced daily and even hourly could ultimately become a mere pastime, and function as a sort of police over one's outward conduct without any longer affecting one's deeper being. The only countermeasure was to derive from one's own breast moral principles that were equally valid, effective, and soothing.

"Our parents had tacitly taken our union for granted, and, I do not quite know how it came about, the presence of our new friend hastened our betrothal. It seemed his wish to celebrate the confirmation of our happiness within our quiet circle, in the course of which he had to hear the leader take the occasion to remind us of the Bishop of Laodicea and of the great danger of lukewarm faith, which the community thought to have remarked in us. We discussed these problems once more, and our friend left us a page about them which I later often found cause to consult.

"Then he departed, and it was as though all good spirits had withdrawn with him. It is not a new observation that the appearance of a

superior person in a circle has an epoch-making effect, and that his departure leaves a void, into which some chance misfortune often rushes. And now let me draw a veil over what followed. An accident abruptly destroyed the precious life of my betrothed and his magnificent form. He stalwartly used his last hours to be united to me, disconsolate as I was, and to secure for me the rights to his inheritance. But what made this occurrence even more painful to his parents was that they had lost a daughter shortly before, and now saw themselves orphaned in the full sense; their tender natures were so crushed that they did not long survive. They soon followed their loved ones, and yet another misfortune befell me when my own father suffered a stroke and, although he retained full perception of the world, lost all intellectual and physical capacity. And so, in my great need and solitude, I truly required all that self-sufficiency which I had earlier practiced in the expectation of a good marriage and happy life together, and in which I had recently been confirmed by the pure, lifegiving words of the mysterious traveler.

"Yet I must not be ungrateful, since in my plight I still have a capable assistant, who as my agent manages everything that is considered a man's task in our business. If he comes back from town tonight and you meet him, you will learn of my remarkable relationship to him."

I had responded from time to time and sought through my approval and sympathy to make her open her heart more and more and keep her story flowing. I did not avoid touching closely on what had not yet been fully expressed. She, too, was drawing ever closer, and we had reached a point where at the slightest pretext the open secret would have been put into words.

She stood up and said, "Let us go to Father." She hurried on ahead, and I followed her slowly; I was shaking my head at the peculiar position in which I found myself. She led me into a very clean back room, where the good old man sat motionless in a chair. He had scarcely changed. I approached him, and he looked at me, first blankly, then with more life in his eyes. His features brightened, he tried to move his lips, and as I reached out my hand to take his motionless one, he grasped mine of his own accord, pressed it, and rose from the chair, his arms outstretched toward me. "Oh God!" he cried, "Squire Lenardo! It is he, he himself!" I could not refrain from clasping him to my heart. He sank back into the chair, his daughter hurried over to assist him. She, too, cried, "It is he! You are Lenardo!"

The younger niece had come in; they led the father, who could suddenly walk again, to his room. Turning toward me, he spoke with perfect clarity, "How fortunate, how fortunate! We shall see each other again soon."

I stood there, looking at the floor and thinking; little Marie came back and handed me a paper which, she told me, was the one that had been mentioned. I recognized Wilhelm's hand at once, as earlier his figure had emerged from the description. Various strange faces swarmed about me, there was an odd commotion in the vestibule. And indeed, it is an unpleasant feeling to be led from the enthusiasm of a perfect reunion, the conviction of grateful remembrance, the acknowledgment of life's wondrous ways, and all the warmth and beauty that such an event may arouse in us, back to the harsh reality of mundane distractions.

This time Friday evening was not as cheerful and merry as usual; the agent had not returned from town on the market boat, but only reported in a letter that business would keep him there until tomorrow or the day after. He would return by some other means and bring everything that had been requested and promised. The neighbors, young and old, who had gathered to wait, as was their custom, made long faces, and especially Lieschen, who had set out to meet him, seemed to be in a very bad humor.

I had taken refuge in my room, still holding the paper, but without reading it, for I had been secretly vexed to learn from her account that Wilhelm had hastened the engagement. "All friends are like that, they are all diplomats; instead of honestly reciprocating our trust, they pursue their own views, go counter to our wishes, and lead our destiny astray." Thus I exclaimed, but soon abandoned my unjust reproach, admitted that my friend had been right, especially in light of the present situation, and no longer refrained from reading the following:

"Every person, from the earliest moments of his life, finds, first unconsciously, then half consciously and finally wholly so, that he is continually limited, restricted in his position; but since no one knows the purpose and aim of his existence, but rather the hand of the Almighty conceals this mystery, he merely gropes about, snatches at what he can, lets go again, stands still, moves, hesitates, and rushes ahead; thus in a host of ways arise the errors that perplex us."

"Even the most sensible soul is forced in his daily life to do what is prudent for the moment, and therefore generally does not achieve clarity. Seldom does he know with any certainty where he should turn next, and what he really should do or not do."

"Fortunately all these questions and hundreds of other odd ones are answered by your unceasingly active way of life. Continue with direct attention to the task of the day, and always examine the purity of your heart and the firmness of your spirit. When you then catch

your breath in an hour of leisure and have room to contemplate higher matters, you will certainly achieve a proper attitude toward the Sublime, to which we must submit with veneration, regarding every occurrence with reverence, recognizing in it guidance from above."

Saturday the 20th

Engrossed in thoughts, through whose strange windings a sensitive soul will gladly and sympathetically accompany me, I was walking up and down along the lake at daybreak. The mistress—I was very pleased not to have to think of her as a widow—appeared, as I had hoped, first at the window, then at the door. She told me her father had slept well, awakened cheerfully, and announced in clear speech that he would like to stay in bed and see me not today, but tomorrow, after the worship service, by which time he would certainly feel stronger. She then told me that she would be leaving me alone for much of the day; it would be a very busy day for her. She came down and gave me an account of it.

I listened to her, simply to hear her, and concluded that she was completely absorbed by the business at hand, which appealed to her as a customary duty and as one in which she engaged by choice. She continued, "It is our established practice that the weaving should be finished by the end of the week and be brought on Saturday afternoon to the supervisor, who checks it over, measures it, and weighs it, and determines whether the work is correctly done and free of defects, and whether it conforms to standards in size and weight; if all is found to be right, he then pays the agreed upon weaver's fee. He for his part must now trim all dangling threads and knots from the cloth, lay it out nicely so that the best side with fewest defects lies uppermost, and thereby make the wares as attractive as possible."

In the meantime many weavers came down out of the mountains, bringing their wares into the house; among them I spied the one for whom our Harness-Fixer was working. She thanked me very sweetly for the gift I had left, and prettily recounted how the Harness-Fixer was at her house working on her empty loom while she was gone, and how he had assured her as she was leaving that Dame Susanna would at once see the difference in the weaving. She thereupon went into the house like the rest, and I could not forbear to ask my dear hostess, "For Heaven's sake, however did you come by that strange name?" "It is the third," she replied, "that has been imposed upon me. I allowed it gladly because my in-laws wished it; it was the name of their deceased daughter, whose place they allowed me to fill, and a name remains the finest, most living representative of a person." To this I replied, "You shall have yet a fourth, for were it up to me, I

would call you Virtuous Beauty." She made a charming, modest curtsey, and was able to connect and enhance her delight at her father's recovery with her joy at seeing me again in such a way that I thought I had never heard or felt anything more flattering and more pleasing in my life.

The virtuous beauty, who had repeatedly been called back to the house, delivered me to an intelligent, well-informed man, who was to show me the sights of the mountains. The weather was splendid, and we traversed all sorts of terrain. But it may be imagined that neither cliffs nor forests nor waterfalls, much less mills or smithies, or even families of skilled wood-carvers could capture my attention. However, the expedition was planned to last the entire day. My guide carried a choice breakfast in his knapsack, and at midday we had a good meal at the company house of a mine, where no one could quite make me out, since to capable men nothing is more tiresome than an empty, hypocritical display of interest in their occupation.

But the guide understood me least of all, for the Yarn Carrier had commended me to him with great praise for my technical knowledge and my special interest in such matters. That good man had also talked about my constant writing and note-taking, for which the guide was fully prepared. My companion waited a long time for me to produce my notebook, and at last, with some impatience, inquired after it.

Sunday the 21st

It was almost noon before I was able to see my friend again. The worship service, at which she did not wish me to be present, had already been held; her father had attended, and, speaking the most edifying words clearly and intelligibly, had moved everyone present and herself to heartfelt tears. "They were," she said, "familiar sayings, verses, expressions, and phrases which I had heard hundreds of times, and had scorned as empty sounds. This time, however, they flowed forth so wonderfully melted together, gently glowing, free of dross, as when we see molten metal running from the crucible. I was in terror lest he consume himself in these outpourings, but he let himself be led back to bed quite cheerfully. He wanted, he said, to collect himself and would, as soon as he felt strong enough, have the guest summoned to him."

After dinner our conversation became livelier and more confiding, but for that very reason I could feel and see that she was holding something back, was struggling with disquieting thoughts, since she could not quite manage to present a bright face. After I had sought in various ways to make her speak out, I confessed honestly that I thought I detected a certain melancholy, an expression of worry, and if it was

domestic or business cares, she should reveal them; I was wealthy enough to pay an old debt to her in any form.

Smiling, she denied that this was the case. "When you first arrived," she continued, "I took you for one of the gentlemen from Trieste who give me credit, and I was pleased with myself, since I knew my money was on hand, whether the whole sum was wanted or a part of it. But what weighs on my mind is a business matter, unfortunately not of concern for the moment; no, for the entire future. The increasing dominance of machine production torments and frightens me: it is rolling on like a storm, slowly, slowly; but it is headed this way, and it will arrive and strike. My husband was already full of this mournful feeling. People think about it, people talk about it, and neither thinking nor talking can help. And who likes to picture such calamities! But consider that there are many valleys winding through the mountains like the one through which you came down. The pretty, happy life you witnessed there must still be vividly before you, and the dressed-up crowd gathering from all sides yesterday was wonderful testimony. Think how all this will gradually collapse, wither, and the wilderness, enlivened and populated over centuries, will once more revert to its primeval solitude.

"Here are but two choices, one as sorry as the other: either to seize on the new development and thus hasten our ruin, or to set out, taking the best and worthiest people with us, and seek a kinder fate across the seas. Each has its own drawbacks, but who will help us weigh the principles that should prevail? I know perfectly well that people nearby are considering setting up machines and snatching the people's livelihood for themselves. I cannot blame anyone for thinking of himself first, but I would consider myself despicable if I were to plunder these good people and see them finally wander out into the world, poor and helpless. And wander they must, sooner or later. They sense this, they know this, they say this, and no one decides on any helpful steps. And yet, where should the decision come from? Is it not as difficult for everyone else as for me?

"My fiancé and I had decided to emigrate; he often discussed the ways and means of disengaging ourselves here. He kept an eye out for the better people whom we might gather around us, with whom we might make common cause, whom we could draw to us and draw away with us. We yearned, with perhaps all too youthful hope, for lands where that which would here be a crime would be regarded as rights and responsibilities. Now I am in the opposite situation: the honest assistant, who remained with me after my husband's death, admirable in all respects, devoted to me in tender friendship, is entirely of the opposite opinion.

"I must speak of him to you before you have had an opportunity to see him; I would rather have done so afterward, since personal presence solves many a riddle. Of about the same age as my husband, he formed a strong attachment, while still a poor little boy, to his well-to-do and well-meaning playmate and to the family, the house, and the trade. The two grew up together and stood by one another, and yet they were of two utterly different natures. One had a free and sharing spirit, while the other, crushed and constricted in earliest youth, clung to the slightest possession he could obtain, and though of pious disposition, thought more of himself than of others.

"I know that from the very first he had an eye on me, which he was entitled to do, for I was poorer than he; but he held back as soon as he noticed his friend's affection for me. Through unswerving industry, activity, and loyalty he soon became a partner in the business. My husband secretly intended to establish him here when we emigrated and entrust to him what we left behind. Soon after the death of that excellent man he drew closer to me, and some time ago did not conceal that he was asking me for my hand. But now the doubly peculiar circumstance crops up that he has always declared himself opposed to emigrating, and instead vigorously urges that we too install machinery. To be sure, his reasons are powerful, since there is a man living in our mountains who, if he should turn his back on our simpler tools and wish to build himself more complicated ones, could ruin us all. This man, who is highly skilled at his trade—we call him the Harness-Fixer—is devoted to a well-to-do family in the neighborhood, and one may well believe that he has it in mind to make good use of those progressive inventions for himself and those he favors. There can be no objection to the arguments of my assistant, for we have already in a sense lost too much time, and if the others should seize the advantage, we must do likewise, and now in an unfavorable position. It is this which worries and torments me, and that is why you, my dearest man, appear to me as a guardian angel."

I had little comfort to offer in reply; the case seemed so complicated that I asked for time to reflect. But she continued, "I have still more to tell you which will make my position appear even more peculiar to you. The young man, to whom I am not personally disinclined, but who can in no way replace my husband or win my real affection"—she sighed as she spoke—"has for some time been decidedly more insistent, and his speeches are as loving as they are sensible. The necessity of giving him my hand, the foolishness of considering emigration, and thereby losing the only true means of self-preservation, cannot be denied, and my resistance, my notion of emigrating, seems so little in accord with my usual prudence that in our last, somewhat heated, discussion, I could see his suspicion that my heart must be

committed elsewhere." She brought forth the last words only with some hesitation, and cast down her eyes.

You can imagine what went through my soul at these words, and yet, upon reflection that followed like lightning, I realized that any word from me would merely compound the confusion. Yet at the same time I became fully conscious, as I stood before her, that she had become extremely dear to me, and that I would have to muster all the rational, reasonable strength of mind remaining to me in order not to offer her my hand at once. Let her leave everything behind, as long as she follows me! I thought. But the sorrows of previous years held me back. Should you nurture a new false hope, only to repent of it for the rest of your life?

We had both been silent for a while when Lieschen, whom I had not seen approaching, unexpectedly came up to us and requested permission to spend the evening at the neighboring hammer mill. It was granted without question. In the meanwhile I had pulled myself together, and now launched into a general account of my own: how on my travels I had seen all of this approaching long since; how with each day that passed the pressure and necessity for emigrating increased; yet such an adventure always remained the most risky imaginable. A hasty departure without adequate preparation would bring a sorry return. No other undertaking required so much caution and leadership. This consideration was not foreign to her; she had thought a good deal about all the circumstances, but at last she said, with a deep sigh, "During these days that you have been here, I have been hoping to gain comfort by confiding in you, but I feel worse off than before, and feel profoundly how unhappy I am." She looked up at me, but in order to hide the tears welling from her beautiful, kind eyes, she turned away and withdrew a few steps.

I do not wish to excuse myself, but the wish, if not to console, at least to distract this magnificent soul from her sorrows, gave me the idea of telling her about the strange union of wanderers and emigrants that I had joined some time earlier. Unwittingly, I had already let slip so much that I could hardly have held back when I realized how incautious my confidence might be. She calmed down, marveled, cheered up, revealed her whole being, and questioned me with such affection and good sense that I could no longer be evasive; I had to confess everything to her.

Gretchen came in and said we should come to Father. The girl seemed pensive and annoyed. As she was leaving, the virtuous beauty said, "I let Lieschen have the evening off. You take charge of things."

"You should not have let her go," replied Gretchen. "She is up to no good. You are too indulgent toward that scamp and trust her more than you should. I have just found out that she wrote him a letter

yesterday. She eavesdropped on your conversation, and now she is going to meet him."

A child, who had been staying with the father in the interval, begged me to hurry; the good man was restive. We entered his room; he was sitting upright in bed, serene, even transfigured. "Children," he said, "I have spent these hours in continuous prayer. Not a single one of David's psalms of thanksgiving and praise have I left unrecited, and I add to them on my own with strengthened faith. Why does a man place his hopes only in the near future? There he should rather work and help himself, and place his hopes in the distant future, and trust in God."

He took Lenardo's hand and the hand of his daughter, and laying one on the other, said, "This shall be no earthly bond, but a heavenly one. Like brother and sister, love, trust, serve, and help one another, as unselfishly and purely as God may help you." When he had said this, he sank back with a blissful smile and was gone to his Maker. His daughter cast herself down by the bed, Lenardo beside her. Their cheeks touched, their tears united on the old man's hand.

At this moment the assistant rushes in, and is stunned by the scene. With a wild look, shaking his dark locks, the handsome youth exclaims, "He is dead! At the very moment when I desperately wanted to invoke his restored speech to decide my fate, the fate of his daughter, the being whom I love most, after God, for whom I would wish a sound heart, a heart that could feel the value of my affection. She is lost to me; she kneels beside another! Did he give you his blessing? Admit it!"

The splendid being had risen, Lenardo had stood up and recovered himself. She said, "I do not recognize you, the gentle, pious, now suddenly savage man. You know how I thank you, what I think of you!"

"Thanking and thinking are not the point," he replied calmly. "The issue is the happiness or unhappiness of my life. This stranger worries me. Looking at him, I do not trust myself to outweigh him. Overriding previous rights, loosing previous bonds is beyond my powers."

"As soon as you can be yourself again," said the virtuous woman, more beautiful than ever, "when we can talk as we always used to, then I will tell you, swear to you by the earthly remains of my transfigured father, that I have no understanding with this gentleman and friend beyond what you may know, approve, and share, and of which you must be glad."

Lenardo shuddered to the depths of his being; the three stood for a while, silent and reflective. The young man was the first to speak and said, "This moment is of too much significance not to be decisive. What I say is not spoken in haste; I have had time to think, so hear me out: the reason you refused me your hand was my refusal to follow

you if you, through necessity or caprice, should emigrate. I hereby solemnly declare, before this legal witness, that I will place no obstacle in the way of your emigration, but will rather further it and follow you everywhere. In return for this declaration, which has not been wrung from me, but has only been accelerated by these very strange circumstances, I here and now demand your hand." He held out his own, standing firm and confident, while the other two, taken by surprise, involuntarily drew back.

"It is decided," said the young man, speaking quietly and with a certain pious dignity. "It was to be; it is for the best for all of us; God has willed it. But lest you think this was the result of haste or caprice, you should know that for love of you I had renounced mountains and cliffs and that just now in town I had set everything in motion so that I could live according to your wishes. But now I shall go alone, you will not deny me the means to do so, you will still have enough left to lose here, as you fear, and you are right to fear. For I have finally become convinced: the false, practical-minded rascal has moved into the upper valley, he is installing machines there, and you will see him taking all the livelihood for himself. Then perhaps, and all too soon, you will summon back a true friend, whom you are driving away."

Seldom have three people faced one another in greater embarrassment, all fearing to lose each other, and at the moment not knowing how they should hold onto one another.

With passionate resolve the young man rushed out the door. The virtuous beauty had laid her hand on her father's chilled breast: "We should not place our hopes in the near future," she exclaimed, "but in the distant future; that was his last blessing. Let us trust in God, in ourselves, and in each other; then everything will turn out for the best."

Chapter Fourteen

Our friend read the foregoing with great sympathy, but had to admit that by the end of the previous notebook he had sensed, even surmised, that the good soul had been found. The description of the rugged mountain region had first reminded him of those circumstances, but he was especially put on the trail by Lenardo's presentiment on that moonlit night, and then by the repetition of the passage from his own letter. Friedrich, to whom he explained all of this in detail, was pleased at the turn of events.

But here the task of communicating, portraying, amplifying, and pulling together becomes ever more difficult. Who does not feel that we are now nearing the end, where we are torn between the fear of

losing ourselves in details and the wish not to leave anything unexplained. To be sure, we were informed of a number of things by the dispatch that just arrived, but the letters and their multiple enclosures contained various matters, not all of general interest. We are therefore inclined to summarize the things we knew or had learned of at that time, as well as that of which we were later informed, and in this spirit to bring the solemn business we have undertaken, of being a faithful chronicler, to a fitting conclusion.

Before all else, we must therefore report that Lothario, with Therese, his wife, and Natalie, who would not be parted from her brother, had really already gone to sea in the company of the Abbé. They set out with propitious omens, and it is to be hoped that a favorable wind will swell their sails. Only one unpleasant sentiment, a true moral grief, burdens them—that they were not able to pay a visit to Makarie first. The detour was too great, their undertaking too important. They were already reproaching themselves for delays, and had to sacrifice even a sacred duty to necessity.

We, however, from our narrating and portraying standpoint, should not allow these dear people, who earlier won so much of our affection, to disappear into so great a distance without our having conveyed a more precise account of their recent projects and actions, especially since we have had no detailed word of them for so long a time. Even so we shall omit this, because their activities up to now involved only preparations for the great enterprise on which we see them launched. We live, however, in the hope that we shall happily find them again in the midst of ordered activity that reveals the true worth of their various characters.

Juliette, the sensitive and virtuous one, whom we doubtless still remember well, had married, a man after her uncle's heart, who could work well with him and carry on after him in his spirit. Recently Juliette had spent a good deal of time with her aunt, where several of those on whom she had had a beneficent influence gathered, not only those who will remain devoted to the solid land, but also those who mean to cross the sea. Lenardo, however, had already said farewell, with Friedrich; their communication through messengers was all the livelier.

If the aforementioned noble persons were missing from the guest list, one could still find on it the names of many important ones who are well known to us. Hilarie came with her husband, now a captain and decidedly wealthy landowner. She, with her great charm and loveliness, was gladly forgiven here, as everywhere, for the excessive ease in moving from one interest to another of which we found her guilty in the course of our narrative. The men especially did not hold this greatly against her. A fault of that sort, if it be one, does not strike

them as very objectionable, because each of them could wish and hope to have his turn.

Flavio, her husband, vigorous, cheerful, and charming enough, seemed to possess her love completely; she must have forgiven herself for the past; Makarie, too, found no reason to allude to it. Still an ardent poet, Flavio asked permission to read upon parting a poem he had composed in honor of Makarie and her circle during the few days of his sojourn. He was often seen pacing up and down outside, standing still a while, then with agitated gestures moving on again, writing in his tablet, deliberating, then writing once more. But he seemed to consider it finished when he conveyed his wish through Angela.

The good lady agreed, though unwillingly, and it was pleasant enough to listen to, although no one learned anything he did not already know, or felt anything he had not already felt. But the reading itself was light and pleasing, and here and there the phrasing and rhymes were original, even if one might have wished the whole thing somewhat shorter. Finally he presented it, very nicely lettered, with a pretty border, and everyone parted in mutual satisfaction.

This couple had just returned from a significant and well-employed journey to the south, in order to relieve their father, the major, at the house, since he, along with the irresistible lady, now become his wife, also wished to breathe some of that paradisaical air for their own refreshment.

These two now came to take the other couple's place, and with Makarie, as everywhere, the remarkable woman enjoyed special favor, which particularly manifested itself in the lady's being received in the inner chambers and alone, a privilege the major was also to be granted afterward. This latter made an excellent impression as a cultivated officer, a good householder and landowner, a friend of literature, and even as a praiseworthy author of didactic verse, and was most welcome to the astronomer and the other members of the household.

He was also especially singled out by our old gentleman, the worthy uncle, who, residing at a moderate distance, came over more often than was his wont, although only for a few hours; he could not, in spite of the ample comforts offered him, be prevailed upon to stay the night.

His presence at brief gatherings of this sort, however, was very gratifying, because he then, as man of the world and of the court, assumed an obliging and mediating role, in which connection even a trace of aristocratic pedantry was not felt to be unwelcome. Besides, he was truly at ease this time; he was happy, as we all are when we have important matters to work out with intelligent and sensible people. The comprehensive project was now fully launched and was moving steadily along according to the arrangements agreed upon.

Of this only the chief points. He is, through his forebears, a large landowner over there across the sea. What precisely that signifies, anyone conversant with conditions over there may explain to his friends, since it would lead us too far afield here. These important estates had been leased out until now, and because of various difficulties brought in little. The society, with which we are sufficiently familiar, is now entitled to take possession there, in the midst of a perfect civil polity. From there, as an influential force in the state, it will be able to pursue its own advantage and expand far into the as yet undeveloped wilderness. This is where Friedrich, along with Lenardo, means to take an especially active part, in order to demonstrate how to start from the beginning and follow a path in conformity with Nature.

Hardly had the above-mentioned departed, fully satisfied, from Makarie's house, when guests were announced of quite another sort, though equally welcome. We might scarcely have expected to see Philine and Lydie in such a sacred spot, and yet they came. Montan, who for the time being lingered in the mountains, was to fetch them here and bring them to the sea by the most direct route. Both were very well received by the housekeepers, maids, and other women employed or living there. Philine brought with her a pair of darling children, and distinguished herself in her simple but most becoming clothing by a fairly large pair of English scissors that she wore hanging from a long silver chain attached to her flower-embroidered girdle; sometimes, as if to emphasize what she was saying, she would clip and snip at the air, to the amusement of all present. This soon led to the question whether, in a household of that size, there were not some dressmaking to be done. And it turned out that a pair of brides needed to be outfitted, a happy opportunity. Philine examines the local costume closely, has the girls stroll back and forth before her, and cuts away. Proceeding with cleverness and taste, she manages not to detract from the character of the local costume, yet contrives unobtrusively to blend its clumsy barbarity with such gracefulness that the girls looked better to themselves and to others and at the same time overcame their anxiety about diverging from tradition.

And now Lydie, who could sew with equal proficiency, precision, and speed, became the perfect assistant, and, with the other women helping, it could be hoped that the brides might be decked out more quickly than had been imagined. The girls could not absent themselves for very long, for Philine busied herself with them down to the smallest detail, treating them like dolls or like stage extras. The dozens of ribbons and other festive decorations customary in this region were smartly arranged, with the result that these strong bodies and pretty figures, usually covered up out of barbarian prudishness, now came into their own, and any remaining coarseness took on a special charm.

Yet those who are all too active become nuisances in a well-regulated setting. Philine with her voracious scissors had found her way into the rooms where cloth of all kinds was kept on hand to supply the wardrobe of the large household. The prospect of cutting up all that cloth filled her with rapture; she actually had to be led away and the doors locked, since she lacked any judgment or sense of proportion. For this reason Angela did not want to be announced as a bride, for she was afraid of such a cutter. Altogether, a good relationship between the two seemed impossible to achieve. But that issue can be taken up only at a later time.

Montan delayed his arrival, longer than anyone had expected, and Philine insisted that she be presented to Makarie. This was done, in the hope that they might then be rid of her sooner, and it was indeed singular to see the two sinners at the feet of the saint. They knelt on either side of her, Philine between her two children, whom she pushed down with lively grace. She spoke with her usual gaiety: "I love my husband, my children, and am happy to work for them, as well as for others; you will forgive the rest!" Makarie gave her blessing, and with a respectful curtsy Philine withdrew.

Lydie lay to the left of the saint with her face in her lap, wept bitterly, and could not utter a word. Makarie, understanding her tears, patted her soothingly on the shoulder, then kissed her head along the parting as it lay before her, fervently and repeatedly with pious intent.

Lydie raised herself up, first to her knees, then to her feet, and gazed at her benefactress with pure joy. "What has happened to me?" she cried. "What is this? The heavy, oppressive burden that robbed me of all thought, if not of all consciousness, has suddenly been lifted from my head. I can see freely into the higher regions, direct my thoughts to those heights, and," she added, after a deep breath, "I do believe that my heart wants to follow."

At that moment the door opened and Montan entered, as often a person who has been awaited all too long appears suddenly and unexpectedly. Lydie stepped up to him happily, embraced him with joy, and, as she led him to Makarie, exclaimed, "He must hear what debt he owes to this godly woman, and join me at her feet in gratitude."

Montan, moved, and, contrary to his wont, somewhat embarrassed, said, with a respectful bow toward the worthy lady, "It seems to be a great deal, for I owe you to her. This is the first time that you have come to me frankly and affectionately, the first time that you have pressed me to your heart, though I have long deserved it."

Here we must confide that Montan had been in love with Lydie from her youth, that the more engaging Lothario had carried her off, but that Montan had remained true to her and to his friend, and that

he finally, perhaps to no little astonishment on the part of our earlier readers, made her his wedded wife.

These three, who perhaps might not feel altogether comfortable in European society, did not moderate their expressions of joy when the talk came around to the conditions expected in the New World. Philine's scissors were already quivering, for there was talk of retaining a monopoly on providing clothing to the new colonies. Philine gave a very pretty description of the great stores of cloth and linens, and snipped in the air, already seeing before her the harvest awaiting sickle and scythe, as she expressed it.

Lydie, on the other hand, only now reawakened by those felicitous blessings to shared love, envisioned her pupils increasing a hundred-fold, and a whole race of housewives guided and inspired to precision and neatness. And serious-minded Montan has such a vision of the mountains there full of lead, copper, iron, and coal that he is sometimes tempted to declare all his knowledge and ability mere timid, groping attempts, with a rich and rewarding harvest to be had only over there, if he seize it boldly.

It was predictable that Montan would soon reach an understanding with the astronomer. The conversations they conducted in the presence of Makarie were most fascinating. We find, however, only little of them transcribed, since Angela had for some time now been less attentive in listening and more negligent in transcription. Furthermore, much of it may have been too general for her, and not readily grasped by a young woman. We therefore include in passing only a few of the observations made during those days, which did not even come down to us in her handwriting.

When we study the sciences, particularly those that deal with nature, it is as difficult as it is necessary to investigate whether that which has been passed down to us from earlier times and which our predecessors considered valid, is really well founded and dependable, to the extent that it can be further built upon, or whether a traditional article of faith has come to a standstill, and thus fosters stagnation rather than progress. One indication furthers this inquiry, namely if an assumption has retained its vitality and has influenced and furthered continuing endeavors.

It is just the opposite when new theories are being verified; there one must ask: is this assumption a real advance or merely obedience to fashion? For an opinion presented by energetic men spreads by contagion through the populace, and is then called unassailable—a claim that has no meaning to the true scientist. Church and state may possibly find cause for declaring themselves unassailable, for they have to deal with the recalcitrant masses, and so long as order is maintained,

the means do not matter. But in the sciences the utmost freedom is required, for the scientist works not for today or tomorrow but for an inconceivable progression of ages.

But even if some falsehood does gain the upper hand in science, there will always be a minority for the truth, and if it shrank to a single soul, that would not matter. He will continue to work behind the scenes in silence, in obscurity, and a time will come when people will inquire after him and his convictions, or when the latter, as light becomes widespread and general, can venture forth once more.

What was less discussed in general terms, however, though it was incomprehensible and strange in the extreme, was Montan's revelation in passing that he was accompanied in his explorations of mountains and mining by someone who had quite remarkable faculties and a peculiar affinity for everything that might be called rock, mineral, indeed any kind of element. This companion could sense not only a certain emanation from underground streams, deposits, and veins of metal, as well as coal and whatever else might be massed together, but, what was more amazing still, would feel different with every change of place. The various types of mountains each had a special effect, which, ever since he had invented a peculiar but still adequate language, they had been able to communicate about and to verify in detail. His companion could pass any test quite remarkably, identify chemical as well as physical elements by intuition, and even tell the heavier elements from the lighter ones simply by looking. This person, whose gender he refused to reveal, had been sent ahead with our departing friends, and he had hopes of great discoveries to his advantage in the unexplored lands.

This confidence of Montan's made the astronomer open his own reserved heart, and with Makarie's approval, he revealed the latter's relationship to the cosmos. From subsequent reports by the astronomer, we are in a position to share, if not all one might like to know, at least the main points of their discussion on such important matters.

Here let us marvel at the similarity of these two cases, despite their great differences. One of our friends, lest he become a Timon of Athens, had buried himself in the deepest chasms of the earth, and there had come to realize that human nature contains something analogous to what is crudest and most rigid. The spirit of Makarie provided an opposing example to the astronomer; if in the former case staying in place, then here escape is the province of specially talented natures; we need not penetrate to the center of the earth nor escape beyond the boundaries of the solar system, for we are already sufficiently occupied and clearly directed toward activity, and charged to accomplish it. On and in the ground one finds material for the highest terrestrial necessities, a world of substances made available to man's highest

ingenuity for fashioning. But along the other, spiritual path, sympathy, love, and disciplined, free effectiveness are always to be found. To move these two worlds toward one another, to manifest their reciprocal qualities in the transient phenomenon of life, that is the highest form toward which man must aspire.

At this point both friends made a compact and undertook not to conceal their experiences under any circumstances, because even someone who might smile at them as fairy tales, suitable perhaps for a novel, could still consider them a metaphor for the highest good.

The departure of Montan and his ladies followed soon after, and though the others would gladly have kept him and Lydie there longer, still the restless Philine had been bothersome to several of the other women, accustomed as they were to quiet and order, and especially to the noble Angela, in whose case special circumstances arose to exacerbate the discomfort.

We have already had cause to mention that Angela was no longer carrying out her duty of listening and recording, but seemed otherwise occupied. In order to explain this anomaly in an individual so devoted to order and accustomed to the most rarified circles, we must introduce yet another actor into this already populous drama.

Our old, tested business friend Werner, because his enterprises were growing, even expanding infinitely, as it were, was obliged to look about for new assistants, whom he did not take on without carefully testing them beforehand. He now sent such a one to Makarie, to negotiate for the payment of the considerable sums which that lady had designated and promised to contribute from her large fortune to the new undertaking, especially out of consideration for Lenardo, her favorite. The young man in question, now Werner's aide and journeyman, a vigorous and natural youth, who cut a remarkable figure, commends himself through one unique talent, an incredible aptitude for mental arithmetic, which is useful everywhere but especially among our entrepreneurs, engaged in their joint venture, since in the many aspects of the communal finances they must constantly deal with figures and reconcile them. Even in ordinary society, where discussions about worldly things often involve figures, sums, and balances, the presence of such a person must be equally welcome. Furthermore, he plays the piano most charmingly, his mathematical bent and his engaging naturalness combining and coming to his aid in the happiest manner. The notes flow lightly and harmoniously from his fingers, but at times he indicates that he could be at home in deeper regions; and so he is most attractive, even though he speaks but little and hardly any emotion shows in what he does say. In any case, he is younger than his years; one might almost find him childlike. Whatever his other qualities, he has won Angela's favor, and she his, to Makarie's great

satisfaction, for she has long wished to see the noble young woman married.

Angela, however, always considering and feeling how difficult it would be to replace her, had surely already refused some loving offer, and perhaps even suppressed a secret inclination of her own. But since a successor was now conceivable, had even been all but appointed, she seems to have been overwhelmed by this attractive newcomer, and surrendered to him to the point of passion.

But we are now again in a position to reveal the most important development, inasmuch as all the matters we have long been discussing have gradually taken shape, dissolved, and assumed a new form.

It has now been decided that the virtuous beauty, otherwise known as the nut-brown maid, should come to Makarie's side. This plan, presented in general outlines and already approved by Lenardo, is very close to being realized. All participants agree; the virtuous beauty will transfer her entire property to her assistant. He will marry the second daughter of that hardworking family, and become the Harness-Fixer's brother-in-law. This makes possible the establishment of a new form of manufacture on a local and cooperative basis, and the inhabitants of that industrious valley will be employed in a different, more vital way.

The lovely woman is thereby freed; she will come to Makarie in place of Angela, who is already engaged to her young man. With this our report is finished for the present; what cannot be resolved will remain uncertain.

But now the virtuous beauty insists that Wilhelm come and fetch her. Certain circumstances must still be arranged, and she lays great value on Wilhelm's completing what he actually began. He first discovered her, and a strange fate put Lenardo on his trail; and now she wishes Wilhelm to ease her departure from there and thereby experience the joy and peace of mind that come from having picked up and joined some few of the intertwined threads of fate.

But in order to round off the spiritual and emotional elements of this tale, we must now reveal something even more secret, to wit: Lenardo had never spoken a word with the virtuous beauty concerning a closer tie. But in the course of the negotiations, with all the messages back and forth, delicate inquiries had been made as to how she regarded their relationship and what she might be disposed to do, should anything be said. From her response this much could be gathered: she did not feel worthy to return a love like that of her noble friend by giving her divided self. Affection of that sort deserved the entire soul, the complete powers, of a woman's being; but this she could not offer. The memory of her betrothed, her husband, and their mutual unity was still so vivid, still so absorbed her entire being, that no room could

be found in her heart for love and passion; she could feel only the purest goodwill and in this case the greatest gratitude. It was left at this, and since Lenardo had not broached the matter, it was also not necessary to provide information or a reply.

A few general observations will, we hope, be in place here. The relationship to Makarie of all these persons passing through was marked by trust and respect; all felt the presence of a higher being, yet in her presence there remained to each the freedom to appear according to his own nature. Everyone shows himself as he is, more so than he ever did toward parents and friends, and with a certain confidence, for he was lured and encouraged to manifest only what was good, was best, in himself, for which reason well-nigh general satisfaction reigned.

However, we cannot conceal the fact that Makarie, during these somewhat distracting circumstances, remained preoccupied with Lenardo's situation. She spoke of it to those closest to her, to Angela and the astronomer. She believed she could see Lenardo's inner state clearly before her: for the moment he was at peace; the object of his worry is in perfect safety; Makarie had made provision for the future, come what might. Now he had to embark courageously upon the great undertaking and make a beginning, leaving the rest to the future and to fate. He would, presumably, be strengthened in his project chiefly by the thought that once he had secured a foothold, he would summon her to come over, if not fetch her himself.

In this connection people could not forego certain general observations. They gave close consideration to the rare phenomenon that manifested itself here: love arising from a troubled conscience. Other examples came to mind of impressions, once formed, undergoing strange transformations, of the mysterious development of inborn attraction and longing. They found it regrettable that in such cases there is little advice one can give; but it would be highly advisable to keep one's head as clear as possible and not yield unconditionally to one proclivity or another.

Having arrived at this point, we cannot resist the temptation to share a page from our archives concerning Makarie and the special quality with which her mind was endowed. Unfortunately, this essay was written from memory, long after its contents were communicated, and thus cannot be regarded as entirely authentic, as might be wished in so remarkable a case. Be that as it may, enough is presented here to provoke thought and make the reader consider whether anything similar or approaching this has ever been observed or recorded.

Chapter Fifteen

Makarie stands in a relationship to our solar system that one hardly dares to express. Not only does she harbor it, and see it in her mind,

in her soul, in her imagination; she constitutes a part of it, as it were. She sees herself drawn along in those heavenly circles, but in her own particular way; since childhood she has moved around the sun, and, to be specific, as has now become clear, in a spiral course, moving ever farther from the center and circling toward the outer regions.

If one may assume that beings, insofar as they are corporeal, strive toward the center, while insofar as they are spiritual, they strive toward the periphery, then our friend belongs among the most spiritual. She seems born only to free herself from the terrestrial, in order to penetrate the nearest and farthest realms of existence. This trait, glorious though it is, has been a heavy burden, imposed since her earliest years. From the time she was little, she recalls her inner self as permeated by glowing being, illuminated by a light which even the brightest sunlight could not begin to equal. Often she saw two suns, an inner one, and one outside in the sky, two moons, of which the outer one remained the same size through all its phases, while the inner one grew smaller and smaller.

This gift drew her interest away from ordinary things, but her admirable parents made every effort for her education. All of her talents were awakened, all her activities were put to good effect, so that she satisfied every outward expectation, and while her heart and mind were wholly filled with superterrestrial visions, her actions and dealings always met the noblest moral standards. As she grew up, ever helpful, tireless in performing services large and small, she walked like an angel of God upon the earth, while her spiritual being moved around this world's sun, but in ever widening circles beyond this world.

The overwhelming richness of this state was somewhat mitigated by the fact that there seemed to be day and night inside her as well, so that, when her inner light was dimmed, she sought to fulfill her outward duties most conscientiously, and when her inner light blazed forth, she gave herself over to the most blessed rest. In fact, she claims to have observed a sort of cloud that enveloped her from time to time and temporarily obscured the sight of her heavenly companions, which interval she always managed to use for the well-being and happiness of those around her.

As long as she kept these visions secret, much was required to bear them; what she revealed of them was not acknowledged or was misinterpreted, so that in the course of her long life she passed them off as illness, and the family still speaks in those terms. Eventually, however, good fortune brought her the man whom you now see in our household, equally valuable as doctor, mathematician, and astronomer, in every respect a noble person who, however, first found his way to her out of curiosity. But as she gained confidence in him, and gradually described her states to him, linking the present to the past and

establishing connections among the events, he was so taken with the phenomenon that he could no longer tear himself away, but daily strove to penetrate ever deeper into the mystery.

At first, as he gave her plainly to understand, he considered the entire thing a delusion. For she did not deny that from early youth she had diligently studied the stars and the heavens, that she had been well instructed and had missed no opportunity to clarify her image of the structure of the universe through the use of apparatus and books. Hence he would not be dissuaded that it was all the result of her learning. The workings of an imagination disciplined to a high degree, the influence of memory were to be suspected here, with the assistance of judgment, and above all a secret element of calculation.

He is a mathematician and therefore obstinate, an enlightened spirit, and therefore skeptical. He resisted for a long time, but noted exactly what she described, tried to get at the sequence of various years, and was especially astounded by her most recent declarations, which tallied exactly with the corresponding positions of the heavenly bodies, until finally he exclaimed, "Well, why should not God and Nature create and set up a living armillary sphere, a spiritual clockwork, that might be capable, as indeed clocks daily and hourly do for us, of following the movement of the stars in its own way?"

Here we dare go no further, for the unbelievable loses its value if one tries to examine it in greater detail. Yet this much we shall say—what served as the basis for the necessary computations was the following: to her, the seer, our sun appeared far smaller in visions than when she saw it by day; furthermore the unusual position this heavenly light occupied within the zodiac allowed certain inferences to be drawn.

On the other hand, doubts and errors arose because the visionary would indicate that some heavenly body or other appeared in the zodiac, when it could not be located in the sky. These were probably the minor planets, which had not yet been discovered at that time. For from other statements of hers it could be concluded that she had long since passed beyond the orbit of Mars and was nearing the orbit of Jupiter. Apparently she had been contemplating this planet for some time, from what distance it would be difficult to say, marveling at its extraordinary majesty and watching the play of its moons. But later she had seen it in the most amazing way as a waning moon, indeed, reversed, as the waxing moon appears to us. From this the conclusion was drawn that she was seeing it from the side, and was really about to cross its orbit and press on toward Saturn in infinite space. No one's imagination can follow her that far, but we hope that such an entelechy will not withdraw entirely from our solar system, but when she reaches its boundary will long again to return, in order to exercise her influence upon earthly life again, to the benefit of our descendants.

As we now conclude this ethereal fiction, hoping for indulgence, let us turn once more to that terrestrial fairy tale of which we earlier gave a passing hint.

Montan had declared, with the greatest appearance of honesty, that the extraordinary person who could identify differences among earthly substances so accurately by intuition was already far away with the first wanderers, a claim, however, which should have seemed improbable to anyone wise in the ways of men. For how could Montan and his sort allow such a convenient divining rod to stir from his side. And indeed, shortly after his departure, a suspicion gradually arose, fostered by talk back and forth and by strange tales told by the lower house servants. It seemed that Philine and Lydie had brought along a third woman, on the pretext that she was their servant, for which, however, she seemed utterly unsuited; and in fact she was never summoned when her mistresses were dressing or undressing. Her own simple garb clothed her sturdy and well-built figure very suitably, but suggested as did her entire person, a rustic quality. Her conduct, without being coarse, showed none of that social breeding of which ladies' maids usually present a caricature. She had also quickly found her place among the servants; she joined the gardeners and field hands, seized a spade, and worked for two or three. When she picked up a rake, it flew so skillfully over the ploughed soil that the widest expanse looked like a smooth planting bed. Otherwise she kept still and was soon held in general favor. People told one another how they had often seen her lay down her tool and go running clear across the field toward some hidden spring, where she quenched her thirst. She had repeated this practice daily, always finding a source of clean, running water when she needed to drink, wherever she might be.

So some evidence was left behind for Montan's assertions. He had probably decided to conceal the presence of so remarkable a person from his worthy hosts, who doubtless deserved to be taken into his confidence, in order to avoid troublesome experiments and inadequate tests. But we wanted to communicate what was known to us, incomplete as it is, so that we may kindly alert men of an inquiring mind to similar cases, which perhaps manifest themselves by some sign more often than one might think.

Chapter Sixteen

The steward of that castle which we recently saw enlivened by our wanderers, by nature an active and diligent man, always keeping in mind possible gain for his employers and himself, was sitting con-

tentedly drawing up accounts and reports, taking pains to present and analyze, with some self-satisfaction, the great advantages that had accrued to his district during the presence of those guests. Yet, as he himself was convinced, this was the least of it; he had observed what beneficial effects could be had by active, skilled, free-spirited, and bold men. Some had departed to cross the seas, others to find a place for themselves on their continent; now he became aware of a third, secret, set of circumstances, which he promptly resolved to put to use.

As they were leaving it became apparent that, as might have been predicted and expected, quite a few of the vigorous young men had become more or less intimate with the pretty maidens of the village and the region. Only a few of them had enough courage, when Odoardo left with his followers, to declare that they had decided to stay. Of Lenardo's emigrants, not one had stayed behind, but several of them had averred that they would soon return and settle there, if they could be provided with a reasonably sufficient income and security for the future.

The steward, who was thoroughly acquainted with the character and the domestic circumstances of all who made up the little nation under his rule, gloated secretly like a true egotist over these events. Here were people going to such effort and expense to prove themselves free and active overseas or in the interior, and yet they were bringing him, sitting peacefully on his acres, extraordinary advantages for house and lands, giving him the opportunity to hold on to some of the best of them and gather them about him. His thinking, broadened by the present situation, found nothing more natural than that liberality well employed should have laudable, productive results. He at once resolves to undertake something similar in his own small domain. Fortunately, the prosperous inhabitants had been all but compelled to hand their daughters over legally to these premature bridegrooms. The steward persuaded them to view such a social mishap as good fortune, since in fact it was fortunate that precisely the most useful artisans had drawn this lot. So it was not difficult to make preparations for a furniture factory, which would require no great space or special conditions, but only skill and sufficient supplies of material. The steward promised this latter; the inhabitants contributed wives, space, and distribution, while the immigrants provided the skill.

All this the clever businessman had been quietly thinking through in the presence and commotion of the crowd, and could therefore set to work as soon as things had calmed down around him.

Calm, albeit a somewhat funereal calm, had settled over the streets of the village and the castle courtyard after this flood had receded, when a rider galloped up to the castle, summoning our businessman from his computations and calculations, and disturbing his peace. To

be sure, the horse's hooves did not clatter—he was unshod—but the rider, who leaped down from the blanket—he rode without saddle or stirrups and controlled the horse only with a snaffle—shouted loudly and impatiently for the residents, for the guests, and was upset and astonished to find everything so still and dead.

The clerk did not know what to make of the new arrival; after some sharp words had been exchanged, the steward himself came out, and could also say no more than that everyone was gone. "Where to?" was the quick question of the spirited young stranger. Phlegmatically the steward specified the route taken by Lenardo and Odoard, as well as that of a third, ambiguous figure, whom they had sometimes called Wilhelm, sometimes Meister. This latter had embarked on the river a few miles away; he was going downstream, first to visit his son, and then to pursue some important business.

No sooner had the youth mounted his horse, and taken note of the quickest way to the river, than he was out the gate and speeding away so fast that the steward, who looked after him from an upper window, could hardly tell by a cloud of dust that the bewildered rider had taken the proper road.

The last of the dust had barely drifted off in the distance, and our steward was about to sit down again to his work, when a courier came dashing in by the castle's upper gate, and likewise asked after the group, to whom he had been hastily dispatched with one last thing to deliver. He had a fairly large package for them, but also a separate letter addressed to Wilhelm, known as Meister. A young woman had earnestly entrusted this letter to his special care and insisted he deliver it as soon as possible. Unfortunately, he, too, could receive no other reply than that the birds had flown, and that he had better proceed with utmost haste, so that he might hope either to catch up with all of them or to receive further directions.

We may not, however, withhold from our readers the letter itself, which turned up among the many papers confided to our care, and has great significance. It was from Hersilie, a young lady as remarkable as she is engaging; she has appeared but seldom in our communications, but has, at each appearance, surely proved irresistible to every reader of wit and sensibility. Her destiny is also probably one of the oddest that can befall a delicate soul.

Chapter Seventeen

Hersilie to Wilhelm

I sat in thought and could not tell you what I was thinking. But a pensive blankness sometimes comes over me, a sort of consciously felt

indifference. A horse gallops into the courtyard and awakens me from my tranquility; the door flies open and in strides Felix, in youthful radiance like a young idol. He rushes up to me, wants to embrace me, I repulse him, he seems not to mind, keeps at a slight distance, and with unclouded cheerfulness praises the horse that brought him here, describes his studies and his pleasures, in detail and trustingly. Reminiscing about the past brings us to the splendid casket. He knows that I have it, and demands to see it; I give in, it was impossible to refuse. He looks at it, tells me in detail how he discovered it; I lose my head and betray that I am in possession of the key. Now his curiosity becomes extreme; that, too, he must see, if only from a distance. No one could have pleaded more earnestly and charmingly; he pleads as if he were praying, goes down on his knees, and implores with such fiery, beautiful eyes, with such sweet and flattering words, and so I was again seduced. I showed him the miraculous mystery from afar, but quickly he seized my hand and tore the key from it and jumped mischievously to one side, around a table.

"I have no benefit from the casket or the key," he exclaimed. "It is your heart I would wish to open, so that it should reveal itself to me, come to meet me, press me to itself, allow me to press it to my breast." He was infinitely handsome and lovable, and as I tried to approach him he kept pushing the casket before him along the table. Already the key was in; he threatened to turn it and really did turn it. The little key broke off, the outer half fell on the table.

I was more bewildered than one can be and should be. He takes advantage of my confusion, leaves the casket where it is, comes after me and takes me in his arms. I struggled in vain; his eyes drew closer to mine, and it is beautiful to see one's own image in the loving eyes of another. I saw this for the first time as he passionately pressed his mouth against mine. I must admit that I returned his kisses, for it is beautiful to make someone happy. I tore loose, the gulf between us seemed to me only too distinct. Instead of composing myself, I went too far; I pushed him away angrily. My confusion gave me courage and sense; I threatened, I scolded him, ordered him never again to appear before me; he took me at my word. "Good," he said, "I shall ride into the world until I perish." He threw himself onto his horse and galloped off. Still half dreaming, I go to put the casket away; the broken half of the key was lying there, and I found myself in double and triple perplexity.

O men, O humans, will you never cultivate reason? Was it not bad enough that the father should have sown so much mischief; did we also need the son to throw us into hopeless confusion?

I have kept these confessions here for a time, but now a curious circumstance has arisen, which I must report, and which clarifies and obscures the foregoing.

An elderly goldsmith and jewel merchant whom my uncle holds in great esteem arrives and shows us strange antique treasures. I am prompted to bring out the casket: he examines the broken key and points out what we had previously overlooked, that the break is not rough but smooth. On contact the two ends lock onto each other, and he draws the key out whole—they are magnetically joined and hold each other, but unlock only for the initiate. The man steps back some distance, the casket springs open, but he quickly snaps it shut again. Such secrets were better left untouched, he said.

You surely cannot imagine my incomprehensible state of mind, thank God, for how, if one is not oneself confused, can one recognize confusion. The significant casket stands before me, the key that does not unlock it is in my hand; I would gladly leave the casket unopened, could the key but unlock my immediate future.

It has been some time since you have worried about me, but I beg, implore, urgently recommend that you search for Felix. I have sent out in vain for any traces of him. I do not know whether I should bless or dread the day that will bring us together again.

At last, at last! The courier is insisting that he be dismissed. He has been kept here long enough; he is supposed to catch up with the emigrants with important dispatches. He will probably find you among this company, or be told where to look. In the interval I shall have no peace.

Chapter Eighteen

The boat was gliding down the river beneath the hot midday sun, while gentle breezes cooled the warm aether. Gentle banks to either side offered a simple but pleasant vista: wheat fields grew near the stream, and good soil came so close that swirling waters, throwing themselves up at spots, had mightily attacked the soft earth and swept it away, so that steep cliffs of considerable height had formed.

High above on the jagged edge of such an escarpment, where once the towpath must have run, our friend saw a young man, well-built and strong of frame, come trotting up. But before anyone could get a closer look at him, the grassy overhang broke loose, and the unfor-

tunate rider, horse above, man beneath, hurtled abruptly into the water. There was no time to consider how or why; the boatmen rowed swift as an arrow toward the eddy, and in an instant had seized their beautiful booty. The noble youth lay as though lifeless in the boat, and after brief consideration the skilled men rowed to a sandbar that had formed in the middle of the river. Landing, carrying the body ashore, stripping and drying him was a matter of moments. Still not a sign of life to be seen; the lovely flower wilted in their arms.

Wilhelm immediately reached for his lancet to open a vein in his arm. A rich stream of blood sprang forth, and mingling with the winding, rippling waves, followed the course of the swirling stream. Life returned; the loving surgeon barely had time to fasten the bandage before the young man was already bravely getting to his feet, looking keenly at Wilhelm and crying, "If I am to live, let it be with you!" With these words he fell upon the neck of his rescuer, recognizing and recognized, and wept bitterly. Thus they stood in tight embrace, like Castor and Pollux, brothers who meet halfway along the road from Orcus to the realm of light.

They bade him calm himself. The stout men had already prepared a comfortable couch, half sunny, half shady, under light bushes and branches. Here he stretched out on his father's cloak, the fairest of youths. His brown hair, soon dry, once more crisped into curls; he smiled, reassured, and fell asleep. With pleasure our friend gazed down upon him, as he covered him. "You are always brought forth anew, glorious image of God!" he exclaimed, "and are always injured again straight away, wounded from within or without!" The cloak slipped over him, the milder rays of the sun gently warmed the young man's limbs through and through, his cheeks took on a healthy glow, and already he seemed fully restored.

The active men, rejoicing in anticipation of a happy outcome to a good action and the prospect of a generous reward, had already almost dried the youth's clothing on the hot sand so that when he awoke he could at once be restored to the condition most fitting for society.

From Makarie's Archives

The secrets of life's pathways cannot and may not be revealed; there will be stumbling blocks over which every wanderer must trip. The poet, however, points the places out.

It would not be worth the trouble of reaching the age of seventy if all the wisdom of the world were folly before God.

The truth is godlike; it does not appear directly but must be guessed from its manifestations.

The genuine student learns to derive the unknown from the known, and thus approaches mastery.

But people are not readily able to derive the unknown from the known, for they do not know that their intellect practices the same arts as Nature.

For the gods teach us to imitate their most special works; but we know only what we are doing, and do not recognize what we are imitating.

Everything is the same, everything is different, everything is beneficial and harmful, expressive and mute, reasonable and unreasonable. And what one claims to know of individual things is often contradictory.

For men have imposed laws on themselves without knowing what they were making laws about; but the order of Nature is given by the gods.

What men have ordained never fits, whether it be just or unjust. But what the gods ordain is always suitable, just or unjust.

But I want to show that the known arts of mankind are like natural occurrences, which take place openly or in secret.

The art of prophecy is of this kind: it perceives the hidden in the visible, the future in the present, life in death, and sense in nonsense.

Thus the initiate always has a firm grasp on human nature, while the uninitiated perceive it now one way, now another, and each emulates it in his own fashion.

When a man comes together with a woman, and a boy is begotten, something unknown has arisen from something known. On the other hand, when the dim mind of the boy absorbs things that are distinct, he becomes a man, and learns to know the future from the present.

The immortal is in no way comparable to the mortal, and yet even that which is merely alive has intelligence. Thus the stomach knows perfectly well when it is hungry and thirsty.

This is how the art of prophecy relates to human nature. And to the perceptive person, both are always right; to the limited person, however, they appear sometimes one way, sometimes another.

In the smithy iron is softened by fanning the fire and taking all the superfluous nourishment from the rod. Once cleansed, it is beaten

and twisted and, with the nourishment of a different water, it again becomes strong. A person experiences the same thing with his teacher.

Since we are convinced that anyone who surveys the intellectual world and becomes aware of the beauty of true intellect can also observe its father, who is sublime above all thought, so we seek with all our might to understand and to express for ourselves—insofar as such things can be formulated—in what way we are capable of beholding the beauty of the mind and of the world.

Therefore imagine the following: two blocks of stone have been placed side by side, one crude and unworked, the other fashioned by art into a statue, whether of a god or a man. If a god, it might represent one of the Graces or the Muses. If human, it could not be any particular person, but rather someone whom art had distilled from all existing beauty.

Yet the stone which art has shaped into a beautiful figure will at once seem beautiful to you, not because it is a stone, for then the other block would also count as beautiful, but because it has a form imparted by art.

The material had no such form; but the form resided in the inventor before it reached the stone. It was in the artist not because he had eyes and hands, but because he was gifted with art.

It follows that much greater beauty was in art; for it is not the form inherent in art that gets into the stone; that form remains in art, and another, lesser version comes out, which is not there purely in itself, nor in accordance with the wishes of the artist either, but rather insofar as the material obeyed the commands of art.

If art produces the equivalent of what it is and possesses, and if it produces the beautiful according to the Idea which always guides it, then it is the one that possesses more, and more truly, a greater and more excellent beauty of art, more perfect than everything that appears in external things.

For insofar as form is diffused upon entering matter, it will be weaker than that which remains in unity. For anything that tolerates a dispersion of itself departs from its essence: strength from strength, warmth from warmth, power from power, and likewise beauty from beauty. Hence every cause must be more excellent than its effect. For it is not non-music that makes the musician, but music, and it is music beyond our senses that produces the music our ears can perceive.

If anyone should despise the arts because they imitate Nature, one can reply that natural things, too, imitate a number of other things, further, that the arts do not exactly imitate what can be seen with the eye, but reach back to those Ideas on which Nature is based, and according to which she functions.

Moreover, the arts generate many things out of themselves, and conversely add many elements that perfection lacks because they carry beauty in themselves. Thus Phidias could portray the god, even though he was not imitating anything visible, but rather had formed an image in his mind of how Zeus would look, were he to appear before our eyes.

One cannot blame the idealists of ancient and modern times for insisting so forcefully on consideration of the one question: whence everything springs and from what everything should be derived. For indeed the vital and ordering principle is so oppressed in the realm of appearances that it hardly knows what to do. Yet we restrict ourselves on the opposite side when we compress the formative principle and higher form itself into a unity that disappears before our inner and outer senses.

Expansion and movement are the conditions of our human existence; these two general forms are the ones in which all other forms, especially the sensory ones, manifest themselves. But a spiritual form is by no means diminished by emerging into appearance, provided that its emergence is a true procreation, true propagation. What is begotten is not inferior to the begetter, and indeed, the advantage of live begetting is that what is begotten can be superior to that which begets it.

It would be of great importance to expand on this further and make it completely clear, better still, in fact, to make it thoroughly useful. A detailed and logical exposition, however, might demand too much attention of one's audience.

You cannot get rid of what belongs to you, even if you throw it away.

The latest philosophy of our western neighbors gives testimony that a person, no matter how he tries, and likewise entire nations, will always revert to what is innate. And how could it be otherwise, when this is what determines his nature and way of life?

The French have renounced materialism and have ascribed somewhat more spirit and life to primal beginnings. They have freed themselves from sensualism and admitted that the deeper levels of

human nature develop of their own accord; they grant a productive power to human nature and do not try to explain all art as the imitation of a perceived external reality. May they persist in such lines of thought.

Eclectic philosophy cannot exist, though, doubtless, eclectic philosophers can.

An eclectic is anyone who appropriates from the world around him and from the events around him whatever is compatible with his own nature; and in this sense everything known as culture and progress has validity, in either a theoretical or a practical sense.

Two eclectic philosophers could thus become the greatest of enemies, if, born with antagonistic temperaments, they extracted from all the traditional philosophies only that which was compatible with their particular natures. One has only to look around to see that everyone proceeds in this fashion and hence does not understand why he cannot convert others to his opinion.

Indeed it is rare that a person becomes a historic figure to himself in old age, and that his contemporaries also become historic to him, so that he no longer wishes to or can enter into controversy with anyone.

If you examine it more closely, it turns out that history does not readily become historic even to the historian: each historian always writes as though he himself had been there, not about what had gone before and what the moving forces were. Even the chronicler more or less hints at the limitations, at the peculiarities of his own city, of his monastery, as well as of his own epoch.

Various sayings of the ancients, which we are wont to repeat, had an entirely different meaning from what we have wanted to give them in later times.

The dictum that no one unacquainted with geometry, no stranger to geometry, should enter the school of the philosophers does not mean, for example, that one has to be a mathematician in order to attain worldly wisdom.

Geometry here means its first principles, as set forth in Euclid and as we require of every beginner. As such, it is the most perfect preparation, indeed introduction, to philosophy.

When the boy begins to comprehend that an invisible point must precede a visible point, or that the shortest distance between two points must be thought of as a straight line before it is drawn on

paper with a pencil, he feels a certain pride and pleasure. And not without reason; for the source of all thought has opened to him, idea and realization—*potentia et actu*—have become clear to him. The philosopher will reveal nothing new to him, for the basis of all thought has already become clear to the geometrician.

If we now consider the weighty dictum “know thyself,” we must not interpret it in the ascetic sense. It certainly does not refer to the heautognosis of our modern hypochondriacs, humorists, and heautontimorumens; it signifies quite simply: pay some heed to yourself, take notice of yourself, that you may become aware of how you stand with your fellows and with the world. For this no psychological agonizing is required. Every sensible person knows and learns what it means; it is good advice that brings everyone the greatest practical benefits.

One should see the greatness of the ancients, especially of the Socratic School, in their setting before our eyes the sources and guidelines for all living and doing, not as subjects of empty speculation but as a summons to life and action.

If our school curriculum always refers us to the ancients, and promotes the study of the Greek and Latin languages, we may congratulate ourselves that these studies, so important for a higher civilization, never decline.

When we confront antiquity and contemplate it with the serious intention of forming ourselves by means of it, we have the sensation that for the first time we are becoming truly human.

The schoolman, when he attempts to write and speak Latin, seems finer and more distinguished to himself than he can fancy in daily life.

A mind that is receptive to poetic and artistic creations feels itself transported by antiquity into a most graceful and ideal state of nature; and to this day the Homeric epics have the power to free us, at least for the moment, from the terrible burden inexorably imposed on us by a tradition of several thousand years.

As Socrates summoned ethical man to himself so that he might simply gain some insight into his own nature, so Plato and Aristotle approached Nature as authorized individuals, the former to assimilate himself to her with mind and soul, the latter to win her for himself with the researcher’s eye and method. And so every step that brings us singly or collectively closer to these three is the happiest event we can experience and a powerful impetus to our education.

In order to rescue ourselves from the endless complexity, fragmentation, and intricacy of modern natural science and return to simplicity, we must always ask ourselves the question: how would Plato have conducted himself toward Nature as she now appears to us, in greater multiplicity despite her fundamental unity?

For we think we are certain that by following this same road we can arrive organically at the very last ramifications of knowledge, and from this base little by little build up and establish the pinnacles of every science. How the activity of our age furthers and hinders us is of course a question we must pose ourselves daily, if we are not to reject the useful and adopt the harmful.

The eighteenth century is celebrated for having devoted itself chiefly to analysis; for the nineteenth century there remains the task of uncovering the prevailing false syntheses and analyzing their content anew.

There are only two true religions, one of which acknowledges and worships the divinity that resides within us and around us, entirely without form, the other of which worships it in the most beautiful form. Everything in between is idolatry.

There is no denying that the human spirit attempted to liberate itself through the Reformation. Enlightenment about Greek and Roman antiquity awakened the wish, the yearning, for a freer, more decent, and more tasteful life. It was, however, furthered to no small degree by the fact that the heart sought to return to a certain simple state of nature, and that the imagination sought to become more focused.

All at once the saints were driven out of Heaven, and our senses, thoughts, and feelings were directed away from a divine mother with a tender child to the adult who performed good works and suffered undeservingly, was later transfigured as a demigod, acknowledged and worshiped as the true god.

He stood before a backdrop where the Creator had spread out the entire universe. A spiritual force emanated from him, took his sufferings as an example for themselves, and his transfiguration was the promise of eternal life.

Just as incense replenishes the life of an ember, so a prayer replenishes the hopes of the heart.

I am convinced that the Bible becomes ever more beautiful the better one understands it, that is to say, the more one realizes and sees that every word we take in a general sense and apply to our-

selves specifically may have had, according to particular situations, according to circumstances of time and place, a unique, special, and directly individual reference.

Properly speaking, we should still be reforming ourselves daily, and protesting against others, even if not in the religious sense.

We have the inescapable, solemn goal that must daily be reaffirmed: to match what we have felt, observed, thought, experienced, imagined, and found reasonable to the word that most accurately captures it.

Let everyone examine himself and he will find that this is much more difficult than one would imagine; for unfortunately people normally use words as stopgaps; for the most part, a person thinks and knows things better than he expresses them.

But let us persist in the effort to purge ourselves, by exercising clarity and honesty, of everything false, improper, inadequate that may develop within or worm its way into us and others.

With the years our trials become more arduous.

When I must cease to be moral, my power is at an end.

Censorship and freedom of the press will always struggle with one another. The powerful demand and practice censorship; the weaker demand freedom of the press. The former do not wish to be hindered in their plans or in their activity by rude dissent, but to be obeyed; the latter would like to express their arguments, in order to legitimize disobedience. This will always be found to be true.

Yet it must also be said here that the weaker, suffering party likewise tries to suppress freedom of the press in its own fashion, specifically when it is engaged in conspiracy and does not wish to be betrayed.

One is never deceived, but rather deceives oneself.

Our language needs a word that would express the relationship of "peoplehood" to people as the word "childhood" relates to the word "child." The educator must hear the voice of childhood, not that of the child. The lawgiver and ruler must listen to the voice of peoplehood, not that of the people. The former always says the same thing, is rational, consistent, pure, and truthful. The latter is so full of demands that it never knows what it wants. And in this sense the law should and can be the generally articulated will of peoplehood, a will which the masses never articulate but which the intel-

ligent ruler hears and the rational one knows how to satisfy and the good one gladly does satisfy.

We do not ask ourselves what right we have to govern—we govern. Whether the people has the right to depose us, that is something we do not worry about—we simply take care that it is not tempted to do so.

If death could be eliminated, we would have nothing against that; to do away with the death penalty would be a difficult task. If that happens, we will occasionally reinstate it.

If a society relinquishes the right to impose the death penalty, individuals immediately turn to self-help, and blood feuds are just around the corner.

All laws are made by old people and by men. Young people and women want exceptions, old people want rules.

It is not the intelligent man who governs, but intelligence; not the rational man, but reason.

When one praises a person, one places oneself on his level.

It is not enough to know, one must also apply one's knowledge; it is not enough to will, one must also act.

There is no patriotic art and no patriotic science. Both of these belong, like everything noble and good, to the entire world and can be advanced only through unfettered exchange among all those living in a given time, with constant reference to what remains and is known to us from the past.

The sciences on the whole are always moving away from life and return to it only by a detour.

For they are actually compendia of life; they bring outer and inner experiences together into a general picture.

Interest in them is aroused basically only in a special world, the scientific world; calling upon the rest of the world and informing it about the sciences, as is done in modern times, is an abuse and does more harm than good.

The sciences ought to affect the outer world only through their higher application: in fact all of them are esoteric and become exoteric only by improving some course of action. All other forms of participation lead nowhere.

Even within their inner circles the sciences attract instantaneous interest when a new discovery is made. A striking advance, espe-

cially something new and unheard-of, or at least extremely suggestive, excites general interest that can persist for years, and has proved most fruitful, particularly in recent times.

A significant fact, an inspired aperçu, spurs a large number of people, first merely to become familiar with it, then to understand it, then to work it out and carry it further.

With every significant discovery, the common people ask what is it good for, nor are they wrong to do so. For they recognize the value of a thing only through its usefulness.

The truly wise inquire into the nature of the matter and its relationship to other things, without regard to its utility, i.e., about how it can be applied to what is known and is essential for life, which quite different minds—sharp-witted, life-loving, technically trained and skilled—will discover soon enough.

From each new discovery the sophists try to extract some advantage for themselves as soon as possible, attempting to secure an empty fame, now by propagating the idea, now by adding to it, now by improving on it, by rapidly seizing possession, perhaps even by usurping it, and through such immature behavior they render true science uncertain and confused, and even its finest result, its practical blossom, withers on the vine.

The most harmful prejudice is the belief that any kind of scientific investigation can be proscribed.

Every researcher must regard himself as someone called to serve on a jury. He must attend only to whether the presentation is complete and set forth with clear proofs. He then sums up what he believes and casts his vote, whether his opinion coincides with that of the presenter or not.

In this process he remains just as calm when the majority agrees with him as when he finds himself in the minority; he has done his part, he has voiced what he believes, and he cannot control others' minds or souls.

But in the scientific world these attitudes have never prevailed; it is all a question of mastery and domination, and because very few people are truly independent, the crowd draws the individual along after it.

The history of philosophy, of the sciences, and of religion all show that opinions can spread en masse, but the ones that always prevail are those that are more easily grasped, i.e., are most conformable

and comfortable to the human mind in its common condition. Indeed, anyone who educates himself in the higher sense can always assume that he will have the majority against him.

Were not Nature in her inorganic beginnings so thoroughly stereometric, how could she ultimately arrive at incalculable and immeasurable life?

The human being in himself, to the extent that he makes use of his sound senses, is the greatest and most accurate physical apparatus there can be; and that is the greatest disaster of modern physics, that it has effectively separated experimentation from the human element and recognizes Nature only in what artificial instruments can register, and indeed, wants to limit and establish thereby what Nature can achieve.

The same is true of calculation.—There are many truths that cannot be calculated, just as there is much that cannot be tested by definitive experiments.

But that is why man stands so high that in him can be represented that which is otherwise not representable. For what are a string and all mechanical divisions thereof compared to the ear of the musician? Indeed, one might say: what are the basic phenomena of Nature compared to man, who must first tame and modify them all in order to assimilate them somewhat to himself.

It is demanding too much of an experiment to expect it to accomplish everything. After all, electricity could at first be produced only by friction, while now its highest manifestation can be produced by simple contact.

As no one would contest the prerogative of the French language to spread and develop increasingly as the language of the court and of cultivation, so it will never occur to anyone to question the merit of the mathematicians, who, treating of the most important matters in their own particular language, earn the world's gratitude by knowing how to regulate, determine, and distinguish everything that comes under the heading of number and quantity in the higher sense.

Every thinking person, when he looks at his calendar or glances at his clock, will remember to whom he owes these benefits. Even if, however, we reverently concede them this honor in time and space, they will recognize that we are aware of something far beyond them, something that belongs to everyone, and without which they themselves could neither act nor have any effect: *the idea and love.*

As one of our merry researchers asks, who knows anything about electricity except when he strokes a cat in the dark, or when thunder and lightning crash and light up the sky? So then how much or how little does he know about it?

We can use Lichtenberg's writings as a most curious divining rod; wherever he makes a joke, a problem lies hidden.

Lichtenberg has also planted an amusing notion in the vast empty space between Mars and Jupiter. After Kant had carefully proved that these two planets had consumed and incorporated whatever matter could be found in that space, the former asked in his usual witty way: why should there not be invisible planets as well?—And was he not perfectly right? Are not the newly discovered planets invisible to the entire world, except for the few astronomers, whose word and calculations we must accept?

Nothing is more pernicious to a new truth than an old error.

People are so overwhelmed by the endless conditions of appearance that they cannot perceive the one source of all conditions.

"If travelers find great delight in scaling mountains, I find something barbarous, even godless, in this passion; to be sure, mountains give us a sense of the power of Nature, but not of the beneficence of Providence. Of what use are they to mankind? If you should venture to live among them, in winter an avalanche, or in summer a rockslide will bury or sweep away your house. The mountain torrent will drown your herds, the wind will blow down your granaries. If you attempt the smallest journey, every ascent is the labor of Sisyphus, every descent Vulcan's fall. Your path is daily blocked with stones, while the torrent is unsuitable for navigation. Even if your stunted herds find meager feed, or if you gather scanty hay for them, they are snatched away either by the elements or by wild beasts. You live a lonely and wretched vegetable existence, like moss on a gravestone, without comfort and without society. And these jagged ridges, these repellent walls of rock, these misshapen granite pyramids, which cover the most beautiful latitudes with the horrors of the North Pole—how should any man of goodwill take pleasure in such things or a philanthropist praise them!"

In response to this amusing contrariety of a worthy man, one might say that if it had pleased God and Nature to develop and extend the original mountain ranges from Nubia westward as far as the great ocean and then to cut through those mountain chains from north to south, valleys would have been created in which many a patriarchal Abraham would have found his Canaan, many an

Albert Julius his Felsenburg, so that their descendants could have increased, easily rivaling the stars in number.

Rocks are mute teachers; they render the observer mute, and the best thing one can learn from them is to keep one's counsel.

What I truly know, I know only for myself; a spoken word rarely proves helpful: mostly it creates antagonism, hesitation, and stagnation.

Crystallography, considered as a science, gives rise to some very curious views. It is not productive, it is only itself, and leads to no conclusions, especially now, when so many isomorphic bodies have been discovered, which prove highly diverse in their composition. Since it actually has no utility, it has developed its great complexity on its own terms. It offers the mind a certain limited satisfaction and has such variety in its details that one may call it inexhaustible, for which reason it attracts superior men and holds them so long under its spell.

Crystallography has something monastic and celibate about it, and is therefore sufficient unto itself. It can have no practical influence on life, since even the most exquisite products of this field, the crystalline gemstones, must first be cut and polished before we can adorn our women with them.

The very opposite may be said of chemistry, which proves to be of the broadest application and most boundless influence on life.

The concept of origination is completely and utterly denied us; for which reason we think, when we see something in the process of becoming, it must have been there already. Therefore the system of pre-formation makes sense to us.

How many significant things we see constructed out of parts. When we look at works of architecture, we see regular and irregular masses piled together; hence the atomistic concept comes readily to mind, and hence we do not hesitate to apply it even to organic situations.

He who cannot grasp the difference between the phantastic and the ideal, between the predictable and the hypothetical, is in a bad way as a natural scientist.

There are hypotheses where intelligence and imagination take the place of an idea.

It is not good to remain too long in the realm of the abstract. The esoteric does harm only when it attempts to become exoteric. Life is best taught through that which is alive.

The superior woman would be she who could take the father's place with the children when he is gone.

The inestimable advantage that foreigners will have, since they are only now beginning to study our literature carefully, is that they will be instantly whisked past the childhood diseases through which we have had to suffer for most of the century, and, if they are lucky, can obtain a wonderful education from us.

Where Frenchmen of the eighteenth century are destructive, Wieland is teasing.

As much poetic talent is given to the peasant as to the knight; all that matters is that each should take his own lot and portray it with dignity.

"What are tragedies but the versified passions of people who make external things into I know not what."

The word *school*, as it is understood in the history of art, where one speaks of Florentine, Roman, and Venetian schools, can henceforth no longer be applied to the German theater. It is a term which perhaps could still be used thirty or forty years ago, when, under more limited conditions, one could still conceive of an education in conformity to Nature and art. In precise terms even in the plastic arts the word *school* applies only to the beginnings, for as soon as it has produced highly talented men, its effects are felt far and wide. Florence exerts an influence on France and Spain; the Dutch and the Germans learn from the Italians and acquire more freedom in mind and spirit, instead of the Southerners learning more successful technique and great precision from the North.

The German theater has reached the final stage of development, in which the general level of cultivation extends so far that it no longer belongs to any single place, can no longer radiate from one particular point.

The basis of all theatrical art, as of every other, is truth, fidelity to Nature. The more significant this is, the higher the level at which dramatist and actor can grasp it, the higher the quality the stage will be able to boast of. In this respect Germany has derived great benefit from the fact that recital of superior literature has become more common, and has even spread outside the theater as well.

All declamation and mimicry depend on recitation. Since in reading aloud all attention and practice is directed toward the former, it is clear that such readings must be training grounds for truth and

naturalness, if the men who undertake such a task are imbued with the value and dignity of their profession.

Shakespeare and Calderon have supplied a brilliant introduction for such readings; still we must always consider whether this overwhelming foreignness, this talent intensified to the point of unnaturalness, might not be harmful to German development.

Characteristic expression is the beginning and end of all art. Now each nation has a special individuality that diverges from the universal character of mankind; at first it may repel us, but eventually, if we accepted it, if we submitted to it, it could overwhelm our own characteristic nature and stifle it.

How much falseness Shakespeare and especially Calderon have visited upon us and how these two stars of the poetic heavens have led us astray is for the literary critics of the future to establish historically.

I cannot countenance complete emulation of the Spanish theater. The sublime Calderon has so much that is purely conventional that a fair-minded observer would have difficulty distinguishing the dramatist's great talent from all the theatrical etiquette. And if you present something like this to an audience, you presuppose goodwill on its part, such that it will be inclined to accept unworldliness, to enjoy foreign attitudes, tones, and rhythms, and temporarily to abandon its own sphere.

Yorick-Sterne was the wittiest spirit who ever wrote. Anyone who reads him instantly feels free and better. His humor is inimitable; not every form of humor can liberate the soul.

"Moderation and a clear sky are Apollo and the Muses."

Sight is the noblest of the senses; the other four instruct us only through the organs of touch: we hear, we perceive, smell, and feel everything by way of contact. Sight, however, stands infinitely higher, rises above matter, and approaches the capabilities of mind.

If we could put ourselves in the place of others, the envy and hatred we so often feel toward them would evaporate; and if we put others in our place, pride and conceit would be greatly reduced.

Someone once compared reflection and action with Rachel and Leah; the one was more charming, the other more fertile.

Except for health and virtue, nothing in life is more precious than knowledge and learning. Moreover, nothing is easier to achieve and less expensive to obtain. The entire effort consists of being calm,

and the only expenditure is time, which we cannot save without spending.

If we could put aside time as we do cash, without using it, this would more or less excuse the idleness of half the world. But not entirely, for this would be like a household living on its capital, without caring about the interest.

The more recent poets mix a lot of water in their ink.

Among the many remarkable inanities of the academies, none seems to me so utterly absurd as the battle over the authenticity of ancient texts, of old works. Is it then the author or the text that we admire or censure? It is always simply the author whom we have before us; what do names matter when we are interpreting a work of the mind?

Who will assert that we have Virgil or Homer before us, when we read the words that have been attributed to them? But we do have the writers before us, and what more do we need? Indeed, I think the scholars who set to work meticulously on this superfluous matter seem no wiser than a very pretty woman who once asked me with the sweetest possible smile who had been the author of Shakespeare's plays.

It is better to do the most insignificant thing in the world than to consider a half hour insignificant.

Courage and modesty are the most unequivocal virtues. For they are such that hypocrisy cannot imitate them; they also share the quality that both express themselves with the same color.

Of all the rabble of thieves, the fools are the worst; they rob you twice, of time and of temper.

Morality leads us to respect ourselves; good manners require us to value others.

Art and science are words that are often used and whose exact difference is seldom understood; one is often used for the other.

I am also not satisfied with the definitions people give for them. Somewhere I saw science equated with wit, art with humor. I see more imagination than philosophy here; it may give us some notion of the difference between the two, but not of what is characteristic of each.

I think one might call science knowledge of the general, distilled learning; art, by contrast, would be science applied to action; science

would be reason, and art its mechanism, for which reason it could also be called practical science. And so, finally, science would be the theorem, art the problem.

Perhaps someone will object here: poetry is considered art, and yet it is not mechanical. But I deny that poetry is an art; nor is it a science. Arts and sciences are both arrived at through thought, but not poetry, for it is inspiration; it was conceived within the soul when it first began to stir. It should be called neither art nor science, but genius.

At this moment every cultivated person should once more take up Sterne's works so that we of the nineteenth century may also see what we owe to him and understand what we might yet owe to him.

As literatures progress, what was once influential falls into obscurity, and what grew out of it becomes dominant, for which reason it is good to look back from time to time. What is original in our own work will be best preserved and appreciated if we do not lose sight of our ancestors.

May the study of Greek and Roman literature always remain the basis of higher education.

Chinese, Indian, and Egyptian antiquities are always mere curiosities; it is highly commendable to acquaint oneself and the world with them, but they will contribute little to our moral or aesthetic education.

The Germans run no greater danger than matching themselves with and against their neighbors; there is, perhaps, no nation better equipped to develop entirely out of its own resources, for which reason it has been of the greatest advantage to them that the rest of the world was slow to take notice of them.

If we look back over half a century of our literature, we discover that nothing was done for the sake of foreigners.

That Frederick the Great wanted nothing to do with them upset the Germans, and they did their best to amount to something in his eyes.

Now that a world literature is beginning to evolve, it is the Germans, to tell the truth, who stand to lose the most. They would do well to heed this warning.

Even discerning people fail to notice that what they want to explain are basic experiences, concerning which one should keep still.

Yet this, too, may have its advantages, for otherwise inquiry might be abandoned too soon.

From now on, anyone who does not apply himself to an art or a craft will be in sorry straits. Learning no longer advances us, with the world moving so fast; by the time we have taken notice of everything, we have lost ourselves.

The world imposes a general education upon us in any case; we need not make any particular effort in this regard, rather, we must master the particulars.

The greatest difficulties lie where we least suspect them.

Laurence Sterne was born in 1713 and died in 1768. To comprehend him, one must bear in mind the moral and religious teachings of his age; in this connection, it is well to recall that he was a contemporary of Warburton's.

A free spirit like his runs the risk of impudence if a noble benevolence does not restore moral equilibrium.

With his sensitivity, everything in him developed from within; through perpetual conflict he distinguished the true from the false, held firmly to the first, and ruthlessly opposed the other.

He felt a distinct hatred for solemnity, because it is didactic and dogmatic and easily becomes pedantry, of which he had an absolute horror. Hence his aversion to terminology.

In the most varied studies and reading, he always found elements of the inadequate and comical.

By Shandyism he means the impossibility of thinking about any serious subject for two minutes at a time.

This rapid alternation between gravity and wit, between sympathy and indifference, between sorrow and joy is supposed to be part of the Irish character.

His sagacity and penetration are boundless.

His cheerfulness, contentment, and patience on the road, where these qualities are tested to their utmost, are not easily equalled.

However much we are delighted by the spectacle of a free spirit of this sort, we are reminded precisely in this case that we must not adopt any of it, at least not most of the things that delight us.

The element of sensuality, which he treats so delicately and deftly, would prove the ruin of many others.

His relationship to his wife, as to the world, deserves attention. "I have not made use of my miseries like a wise man," he says somewhere.

He jests charmingly about the contradictions that make his situation ambiguous.

"I cannot bear preaching. I fancy I got a surfeit of it in my youth."

He is in no respects a model and in all a guide and an awakener.

"Our participation in public affairs is mostly only philistinism."

"Nothing should be treasured more than the worth of each day."

"Pereant, qui, ante nos, nostra dixerunt!" Such an odd statement could be made only by someone who imagines himself to be autochthonous. Anyone who considers it an honor to be descended from rational ancestors will attribute at least as much common sense to them as to himself.

The most original authors of modern times are original not because they produce something new, but only because they are capable of saying things as if they had never been said before.

Hence the best mark of originality is that one can develop a received idea so fruitfully that no one could readily guess how much lay concealed within it.

Many ideas first emerge from the general culture like blossoms from green branches. During the rose season you see roses blooming everywhere.

In fact everything depends on people's dispositions; where these are, thoughts also come forth, and as they are, so too are the thoughts.

"Nothing can be easily represented with complete impartiality. One might say the mirror offers an exception to this, and yet we never see our face quite accurately in it; indeed, the mirror reverses our form and makes our left hand the right. Let this be an image for all observations about ourselves."

In spring and autumn we do not readily think of having a fire, and yet it is so that, if we pass one by chance, we find the feeling it communicates so agreeable that we are inclined to muse on it. This may well be an analogy for every temptation.

"Do not be impatient when others do not accept your arguments."

Anyone who lives for a long time in a significant milieu does not, it is true, encounter all a person can encounter, but something analogous, however, and perhaps certain things without precedent.